

THE MODERN MEANING
of
CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

JOHN M. VERSTEEG

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The Modern Meaning of Church Membership

By
JOHN M. VERSTEEG



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TO DAISY

One who
Never doubted clouds would break;
Never dreamed, tho' right was worsted,
 wrong would triumph;
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

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FOREWORD

IN various quarters the right of the church to the allegiance of thinking people is being challenged. Among the youth of our churches many are in a quandary as to the value of the institution which, in childhood, they were taught to revere. Many mature folks have immature notions of its functions. Thoroughly sincere men and women, believing themselves imbued with the spirit of the Master, are alienated from the one organization that claims preeminently to represent him.

The war has shown multitudes of our young men what devotion to a great cause really means. They will not put their faith or fervor in the church unless it clearly proves its right to their loyalty. No claim of divine right or tradition can satisfy them. Theirs is the pragmatic test: the church must "deliver the goods" or quit.

Therefore an attempt to state the modern meaning of church membership appears timely. The writer believes that a candid examination of the things the church stands for, and the

opportunities for high service which it affords, will convince all pure-purposed people of their duty to ally themselves with the Church of God.

The aim in this brief discussion is to voice the viewpoints and qualities deemed essential by modern leaders for worthy membership in the Christian Church. Our hope is that the marshaling of these suggestions may contribute toward a larger conception of the church and a higher valuation of membership in it.

This book goes forth with the prayer that church membership may universally become: more consistent with New Testament standards; more effective for the establishment of the Kingdom, more glorious in the exaltation of the King.

J. M. V.

PART ONE
THE CHURCH

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"I will build my church."—*Jesus*

"Seek to excel—so as to benefit the church."

—*Paul*

You think the church an outworn fetter?

Kane, keep it till you've built a better.¹

—*Masefield*

One church, one all-harmonious voice,

One passion for Thy High Employs,

One heart of gold without alloys,

One striving for the higher joys,

One Christ, one Cross, one only Lord,

One living of the Living Word.²

—*Oxenham*

¹"The Everlasting Mercy," Collected Poems of John Masefield. The Macmillan Company, New York City.

²"The Goal and the Way," The Vision Splendid. Copyright, 1917, by George H. Doran Company, Publishers, New York City.

CHAPTER I

THE CHURCH AS A NECESSITY

WHAT the church has *not* done is by no means as important as what the church can now *do*. The modern church member does not live under a willow tree. He refuses to surrender to the past. Let those who feel it impingent upon them, flaunt the mistakes of organized Christianity in the face of every generation, but as for us, "We will serve the Lord."

"They sit at home and they dream and dally,
Raking the embers of long-dead years—
But ye go down to the haunted Valley,
Light-hearted pioneers.
They have forgotten they ever were young,
They hear your songs as an unknown tongue—
But the flame of God through your spirit stirs,
Adventurers—O Adventurers!"

That the church is human, fallible, imperfect, is true. But it is not all of the truth. Greater things than this can be said concerning it. The church is a necessity, not simply an optional institution. Modern church mem-

bers make no doubt concerning this. They have ceased being worshipers of the church, but they are still staunch believers in it. "To the Christian the church is a problem just because she is a necessity."

We do well to hear some modern prophets on this point at the outset of our discussion. Professor Rauschenbusch declared: "The church is the social factor in salvation. It brings social forces to bear on evil. It offers Christ not only many human bodies and minds to serve as ministers of his salvation, but its own composite personality, with a collective memory stored with great hymns and Bible stories and deeds of heroism, with trained æsthetic and moral feelings, and with a collective will set on righteousness."¹ Professor Fosdick has this to say: "The church conserves the race's spiritual gains, fits out our youth with the treasure of man's accumulated faith, is a power house of endless moral energy for good causes in the world, exalts the ideal aims of life amid the crushing pressure of material pursuits, holds out a gospel of hope to men whom all others have forsaken, and

¹ A Theology for the Social Gospel, by Walter Rauschenbusch. The Macmillan Company, Publishers, New York City.

to the ends of the earth proclaims the good news of God and the Kingdom. No other fellowship offers to men of faith so great an opportunity to make distinctive contribution to the race's spiritual life. In the presence of the church's service and the church's need, an unaffiliated believer in Jesus Christ is an anomaly. For enrichment, stability, and expression faith must have a fellowship." Professor Royce writes: "The creation of the church was the most important event in the history of Christianity."¹

Not so many voices are raised to slur the church as was once the case. The modern man is interested, but not convinced by the warning of H. G. Wells that not only rituals and creeds but church edifices as well, should be done away with. He is no longer appalled by fluent gentlemen who look down upon the church, sometimes with the look of pity in their eyes, but not infrequently with a generous suggestion of a sneer upon their faces. Shailer Mathews succinctly states our view: "No individual is ever effective unless he can institutionalize and so perpetuate his activ-

¹From *The Problem of Christianity*. The Macmillan Company, Publishers, New York City.

ities. The church is a sort of savings bank in which small deposits of Christian service and influence are collected into a form of social capital. No man can hope to be as effective religiously and morally apart from it as within it."

There is a new insistence on the importance of the church. In spite of its past errors and present faults, it is increasingly being acknowledged that it is indispensable. The conviction is gaining ground that we cannot get on without it. An old theologian called the church "the workshop of the Kingdom," and a modern theologian says that "if there had never been such an organization as the Christian Church, every great religious mind would dream of the possibility of creating something like it." To the question, Can we be good Christians without churches? Dr Snowden replies, "It is like asking, Can we have as good harvests without farming, as good education without schools and as good homes without houses?"

We should not miss the social note in all these testimonies. The argument for church membership as an individual means of salvation is less in evidence to-day. Still, it is difficult to see how anyone could be a Chris-

tian apart from the church. How far does one follow Christ who does not follow him into the church? When a convert asked Billy Sunday, "Do I *have* to join the church?" he replied; "No, you don't *have* to take a steamer to go to Europe. The swimming is good." This characteristic expression vividly presents the difficulty of being a Christian outside of the church. Christianity is not an incident, it is a life. Life must expand, communicate, influence. "Souls grow by contact with souls," said Carlyle. The church as an end in itself would be a disastrous institution, but the church as a means to an end is so necessary, so natural, so practical, that all who love Christ and have his cause at heart will desire to share its fellowship and do its work. ✓

Thus the church is a necessity for the individual Christian. But it is the service-reason for church membership that is foremost in the Christian thought of to-day. The modern member unites with the church not to be saved but *to save*. The Christian Church is a company of saviours who have sanctified themselves for others' sake. The church is an organized effort to supply the spiritual need of the world. Another way of stating this

is to say that the church is a necessity for social weal.

Many live as if they have no need of the church and the church has no need of them. "Saints," said Browning, "tumble to earth with so slight a tilt." Similar comments, applied with relish to the members of the church, denote the popular skepticism about those who make up institutionalized Christianity. There is still refined ridicule and coarse jesting aplenty. Anyone who has worked at bench or desk or loom with the everyday workers realizes what genuine heroism it often requires to be known as a member of the church. We have heard many theories as to why workingmen do not more often join the church, but we cannot recall that it was ever suggested that this blighting ridicule may often be a contributing cause. Church membership, like patriotism, may sometimes be the last refuge of a scoundrel, but it is less and less becoming the last refuge of a coward. The church deals in the stuff heroes are made of.

Thoughtful men and women may well ponder deeply before this proposition of belittling the Christian Church. If the church is necessary both to the Christian life and the Chris-

tian kingdom—in which all of life, every phase of it, shall be Christianized and thus socialized—no person of high purpose will withhold himself from it. Sam Walter Foss said that hermit lives live withdrawn. True; but what is worse still is that such lives always draw back. United lives draw *with*. In our easy use of words we talk of “self-development.” The fact is that we cannot develop by ourselves; we shrivel. Individual development results from group-activity. It is only as we cooperate that we expand. “Any reader of most elementary psychological discussion knows that as men come together in larger and larger groups the very fact of their coming together gives an opportunity for the unfolding of powers in the individual that would not otherwise arise. The contact of one other man stimulates an individual to the manifestation of forces he might never discover if left to himself. In the sphere of social psychology, two and two make, not four, but possibly five, or even ten.” The Christian Church is the united and, therefore, more abundant life of all Christians, engaged, with Him, in the task of drawing the world up the altar-slope to God.

Since we must have the church, let us have the church at its best. The church is not an already finished institution, handed down by one generation to the next, without spot or blemish. It is in the making. The better we make it, the better it will make us.

In an old book of Hermas we are told that the pastor saw an aged woman, weak and infirm, seated in a chair. He was told that she was the church. Then he saw a strong woman in mature life, superintending the erection of a great tower upon the waters, in whose construction multitudes of men were employed, and he was told that she was the church. Then he saw a graceful and surpassingly beautiful young woman, and lo! she was the church. When he sought for an explanation he was told that the key to the mystery lay in himself. When his faith was weak the church seemed old and helpless. When his faith was stronger the church grew young in his eyes and he saw what mighty things she could do, and when his faith was at its best he saw in her beauty and youth the guaranty of her splendid future.

Let us never forget that the church will be true to the best when enough of its mem-

bers think enough of the best to be true to it. Because he saw what a part it was to play in the history of the race, "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for it, that he might sanctify it." Can we do less? Professor Royce, in *The Problem of Christianity*, says that the church addresses mankind with these words: "Create me." This is the call of the church to every believer in the supremacy of the spiritual. The person who unites with the church answers that call. He sees that he cannot do without the church, and that the church cannot do what it should without him.

CHAPTER II

THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH

THOSE men are least to be trusted who dote on the decline of the church. Only a constitutional pessimist would delight in the decline of an institution that for well-nigh twenty centuries has had large meaning in the lives of countless multitudes and to which millions look to-day for help and strength and guidance. For we should make no mistake regarding this matter. It may be true that America has not a church-going people, but a church-belonging people it surely has, as anyone can see by examining the statistics. We spend far more money on and for the church than we ever did. All this is not without significance. The church may have some outworn aspects, but it is itself by no means worn out.

Still, we have to concede that the church does not hold the place it once held. Nor do we bemoan this. The inference is often made that because the church is no longer what it once was its effectiveness is necessarily

decreased. But this seems unwarranted. Silvester Horne said; "The most fatal of all the church's dreams has been the dream of uniformity." If the church has lost the power to rule, it has gained the power to serve. It does not disturb us to know that the church has changed. The church that "does not change is chained." We are not distressed that the church does not hold the place it once held. It is conceivable that it has held the wrong place. Our concern is that it shall fill its proper place now and that it shall fill it well.

There have always been those who mistook change for decay. Hence it is not difficult to account for the many who give but low place to the church. When certain classes assure us, in no uncertain language, that the church steeple, so far from being a guiding finger toward heaven, represents for them the spear thrust into the side of the worker, crucified on the cross of greed, we know at once that they have never read the social creed of the churches and that they live in abject ignorance of the modern conception of the kingdom of God. When some folks apply to the modern church members the incisive speech of Robert Burns:

“Ply every art of legal thieving,
No matter—stick to sound believing;
Learn three-mile prayers and half-mile graces,
Wi’ well-spread loaves, an’ lang, wry faces;
Grunt up a solemn, lengthened groan,
An’ damn a’ parties but your own;
I’ll warrant, then, ye’re nae deceiver,
A steady, sturdy, staunch believer,”

no one needs tell us that they have never been, with eyes open, on the inside of the church, looking out! When the foreign born refuse to cross the threshold of our churches we recall that it is no easy matter for them to rid themselves of the unholy impressions made upon them by the state church of the country from which they came. When the native-born boast that other organizations are equal or superior to the church, we discover, upon inquiry, how tragically they misunderstand the modern church.

Church members, often unwittingly, lend aid and comfort to the enemy. Their sense of fairness and their open vision demand their acknowledgment of the worth of organizations that exist outside of the church and the value of certain wholesome movements that have been set in motion outside of organ-

ized Christianity. Their generous appraisal of these readily leads to a diminished emphasis on the value of the church. It is not a far cry from this to a total depreciation of the church.

Nothing needs to be guarded against more constantly. The modern church member insists on the *preeminence* of the church in the realm of organizations.

In proof of this claim he points to the fact that the church is *fundamental* to other organizations. Regard the parable! The birds once agreed to have a king, and they resolved that the bird which flew the highest should wear the crown. The shrewd wren, reckoning that the strength of the eagle would prevail, perched itself on the eagle's back, and when the mighty bird reached its last point of ascension, up went the wren into the heights still beyond, and so became king. What worthy movement, now acclaiming its greatness, can be mentioned that did not attain its present standing on the strength of the Christian Church? An unbiased examination of the facts will make one realize, as Dr. Jefferson pointed out some years ago, how very much these organizations owe to the church. The fact that they do

not acknowledge their debt does not bespeak a large sense of fairness. That a child should deny its mother and glory in its denial appears to be the ethic of some "altruistic" organizations.

But there is a more commanding reason for its preeminence among organizations. It is not merely the foundation of others, it is the *vitality* for others. Other organizations inevitably tend to be static. Take secret societies. The writer is a member of one and does not believe, as do many, that they are the greatest detriment with which the church has to contend. But a ritual is, after all, a lifeless thing. It has no power to grow. It cannot elevate itself. It stays put. The same is true of constitutions. They too have this tendency to fixity. The members of a fraternity agree to live up to a given level of conduct and experience, and it is required of initiates that they shall attain that level. Whether members go beyond that level or not is not their concern; indeed, insistence upon the value of one level of experience tends to obscure other and higher levels. Growth is a requirement for life. What saves these organizations from dying of moral old age is

that the church imparts to them and to the world at large moral dynamics which are able to bring new life to old forms. That fraternity members give the credit for this new life to their organization rather than to the church is but another evidence of the prevalence of shortsightedness.

Christianity is the religion of power. The church comes as the lifter-up of our heads. It bids us look to the hills and see the mountains beyond them. The church cannot stay put! It is now generally conceded that Jesus knew what he was talking about, and he said of the church, "The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." One proof of the accuracy of this statement is that the church has expanded in spite of its theology! The church has not lived on one level. For a long while it lived in the company of slavery, but the time came when it could endure slavery no longer, and the church moved up. It managed to get along an infamously long time with the liquor traffic, but that level of living was unworthy of it, and it moved up. It lived an exclusive parlor life, content with the fellowship of the "elect," heedless of what was going on in its back yard and in the endless stretches

beyond that; but it discovered that no gospel liveth unto itself, and it carried its evangel to the ends of the earth. It moved up. It long surfeited itself at the luxurious board of Dives, but it has caught a glimpse of Lazarus at the gate, and lo! moving day is upon it. This ought to convince the most incredulous that the church will not stay put.

If you would account for this, you must note that the genius of the church is *discipleship* and *saviourhood*. Modern church members are seekers after truth, and seekers after truth have so much territory to cover that they cannot long settle down in one place. Modern church members are saviours, and saviours are not content with the conquest of one realm.

So it comes that the church is ever discovering new heights for life to ascend. The church is "the pioneer soul" that blazes "the path where highways never ran." Other organizations march over them with blare of trumpets and with great *éclat*. Whence come their conceptions of fraternity, or democracy, of patriotism, of Protestantism? From the Bible? To be sure. But men had the Bible a long time before they saw in it the mighty

things for which we now contend. Recall the biblical defenses of slavery, the scriptural allusions in brewery ads, the passages quoted by German preachers in defense of Hun hoodlumry, and other lies "nailed wi' scripture." How did men come to interpret the Bible as they now interpret it? Humanly speaking, through the church. Who preserved the Bible? Who made it possible to have any Bible at all on which to base these fine principles? Who but the church? And your conceptions of the new day, your ambition to be a maker of to-morrow—all made possible by the church, with its trained ministry, its composite conscience, its organized will. The church gives meaning—new, enlarged meaning—to the ideals to which these organizations have committed themselves. Their vitality is due to the church.

Thus far we have been thinking of the church in relation to other organizations. Now let us think of the church in comparison to them. Let us note one item by way of contrast. The modern church member's belief in the church as preeminent among all organizations is based upon the *work* of the church. As has been said, *it keeps alive the consciousness of God as the supreme fact of human life.* Here

we get to the heart of the matter. This is essentially the reason why the believer in the supremacy of the spiritual allies himself with the church. For this is at once the most stupendous and the most necessary task in the world. Brave King Albert of Belgium marveled at the persistence of the ideal. The church insists on the predominance of it. Nothing matters so much as to get folks to God. What Dr. Slattery holds true of prayer is applicable to the church. Its task is to bring men and women to "the unending surprises of a growing intimacy with God."

"Elect from every nation,
Yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation,
One Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses,
With every grace endued."

We have heard of no organization that claims to do this work to the extent the church does or to anywhere near as many people as the church does. The church outdistances all other organizations in its teaching and worship of God. We are told that "every great

cause which has commanded the allegiance of men has embodied itself in institutions." The greatest cause of all has embodied itself in the church. How much, to how many, for how long has this great cause, this "keeping the consciousness of God alive," been cared for outside of the church? We can afford to be very patient with the idiosyncrasies of church life when we remember the Life the church imparts.

It is not necessary here to enumerate the civilizing work done by the church, whose heroic missionaries swung out its far-flung battleline and marked it with their blood: the international good will engendered by these emissaries of the church, the marvelous educational work of the church, the welfare work done by it, the battles it has won over organized evil, and the struggles it has gone through to enthrone righteousness. "Words will not move as we want them to" when we speak of the work of the church. If men but knew what the church is doing it would end all talk of other organizations as "competitors." The church is with men through all of life. The most vital experiences to which humanity is heir—birth, marriage, death—bring us face

to face with the church. It does more for folks than folks ever do for it.

One is tempted to lose one's patience with those who always apply to the church that great verse of Scripture, "He that loseth his life shall find it." In a very real sense, of course, this is true. But in the suggestion of these critics, that the church ought to find its life by losing it, one somehow suspects that the recommendation is for self-extirpation rather than self-investment; for suicide, not for service. In organizations as with men, the greatest is he who serves. The church does not ask that you recognize its preeminence in servility to it, but in service with it.

Organization, fraught with possibility for good, always involves danger. The modern church member does not minimize this. He is aware of the temptation to the misuse of power. He realizes that church life may easily deteriorate into a scramble for place, and that unholy competition for members and power is still much in evidence. He knows that "the church is constantly exposed to the danger of considering the prejudices of those already within its fellowship and to adapt its work to suit their tastes, rather than to

think primarily of those who are outside and to shape its methods to reach them.”¹

But he knows that these sins are not peculiar to the church. Other organizations succumb to them. In season and out he must labor to keep his church on the heights of purity. He does not claim that the church is perfect. He does claim that it has first place, and therefore first claim. He agrees that the church is only a means to an end, but he believes that it is the best means to the best end. And its best is yet to be.

¹ University Sermons, by Henry Sloane Coffin. Yale University Press, Publishers, New Haven, Connecticut.

CHAPTER III

THE CONFUSION WITHIN THE
CHURCH

Not every member of the church finds it an easy matter to hold the high view of the church which we have thus far set forth. The discoveries one is likely to make at the beginning of church life tend to make this cheerful view exceedingly difficult. Many intelligent people, new to the fellowship of faith, are disturbed, if not bewildered, by the shortcomings they detect.

Principal Forsyth, in a recent book, pictures the church as having been "on its elbow, collecting its senses and looking around." Many, upon entering church relationship, are shocked to find that their church still maintains that posture. They wonder if the church has not been in business long enough to know its affairs by this time. Why does not the church furnish definite teachings and definite tasks? Why does it often halt between two opinions? Uncertainty on the part of the

modern church is a prolific source of confusion and dissatisfaction for the new member.

Hand in hand with the discovery of this uncertainty often comes a feeling of insecurity. The new members came to the church for shelter; they find that it is the front line of attack. It is constantly under fire. If ever men had to excuse themselves for not belonging to the church, to-day they must be constantly ready to give a reason for their allegiance to it. They are surprised to find themselves held responsible for beliefs which they either do not agree with or about which they know but little. The validity of institutional Christianity is openly challenged. They are frequently confronted with the question: What *right* has the church to exist? And they do not find it easy to answer that question.

This sense of insecurity is often increased by the discovery that the church has defects undreamed of when membership in it was first contemplated. It is shocking to learn that the church has made claims for itself which it cannot hope to live up to, or that it makes claims for itself which it *must not* live up to. What marvel that many should come to ques-

tion whether membership in the church does, after all, foster that "equal temper of heroic hearts" which the Christian life demands?

"I am all mixed up," moaned a young friend after a brief period of church membership. On the one hand, he had encountered in the church those who were openly dissatisfied with it; on the other hand, he had met those who strenuously defended its history and life. Some discounted the theological views of their church, while others criticized their criticism and ardently advocated the traditional tests. He heard the ecclesiastical body with which he had allied himself challenged by its own members, but he also heard other voices ring out anathemas on the modern viewpoints responsible for this challenge. In short, he had been impressed and depressed by the diversity of opinion that obtained both as to the teachings and the tasks of the church. His mental struggle was: How can two walk together except they be agreed? A lack of harmony had been evinced and had made him sad.

He had noticed another thing that added not a little to his confusion. He saw that these opposite views were not confined entirely to different denominations. Had this been so,

the problem would have been far more simple. But both views were found within the same denomination and within the same church. Here and there he might have found a church entirely on one side of the fence, but the majority contained both elements. He had entered the church with a "hunger and thirst after righteousness" and was almost irresistibly drawn to develop an appetite for a conflict about which he understood but little. He got the feeling that he had come asking for bread and had received a stone.

When we probe further into the causes for his difficulties, we find two things chiefly responsible for his confusion. The first of these is the church's *lack of authority*. The mere existence of the differences in the church would not be so bad if only the church took a clear, steady, well-defined attitude toward them. Instead, the church appeared neutral. Occasionally our friend might have heard some ardent advocate acclaim his particular view as well-nigh infallible and in the same breath consign all other views to outer darkness. But, amid all conflicting opinion, the church at large seemed not to utter a word. One needs no rare gifts of imagination to see how this

observation may gnaw at the vitals of confidence. Faith in the church, even as faith in God, means not only trustfulness but also trustworthiness. Now, this is the question that came to his mind: Is the church trustworthy? For him, it had no authority on the issues that mattered most.

The other thing that accounted for his confusion was the church's *lack of unity*. To a sensitive person this may prove the larger source of irritation. "Hopelessly divided" is the verdict many have rendered pertaining to the Church of Christ. Many a soul is cast down at sight of the divisive forces that appear on every hand. The coming of Jesus into one's life is a unifying experience. "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus," Paul reminded the Galatians. He makes one kin to all the world. When Saul Kane in Masfield's masterpiece had met Him, he became immediately convinced that

"... every bird and every beast
Should share the crumbs broke at the feast."¹

But when one enters into relation with the church does his experience tally with that

¹ "The Everlasting Mercy," from *Collected Poems of Masfield*. The Macmillan Company, Publishers, New York City.

which came to him when he entered into relation with Christ? It was this that perplexed our friend. Had he been poet, his words might have flamed forth:

“See! In the rocks of the world
Marches the host of mankind,
A feeble, wavering line—
Factions divide them, their hosts
Threaten to break, to dissolve.
Ah, keep, keep them combined!
Else of the myriads who fill
That army, not one shall arrive.”

Confused, no authority to guide him, no unity to hearten him, what should he do?

Two courses were open to him. One was to assume a “holier than thou” attitude toward his church and toward the church at large. He would not have been a pioneer had he done this. We have all encountered those who contrast “churchianity” with Christianity and intimate clearly that *they* have chosen the better part. In almost every church there are some who advertise themselves as “Isles of Safety” amidst the streams of confusion. This subtle species of self-righteousness has decoyed many people of great spiritual promise and led them off until they became carping critics of

the Church of God. It follows that the shortcomings of the church were soon explained by the shortcomings of the members. Once let the feeling get control that the church is untrue in its aims and untrue in its claims, and you will forthwith go in search of the trouble-makers. It is revealingly human how steadfastly we pass ourselves by in this quest. We become obsessed of the belief that

“The churchmen fain would kill the church,
As the churches have killed their Christ.”

The other view open to our young friend was recourse to thought. He could *review* the church and think over again the significance of membership in it. This he did. This we shall want to do in fairness to ourselves.

It will help us to a clearer examination of the facts if we remember that it is not necessarily cause for unrest that the church is being challenged. This is but part of that larger investigation which takes in earth and sea and sky. The era of the exclamation mark has made way for the day of the interrogation point. Far worse things might come to us than to be unsettled.

"It is man's privilege to doubt,
If so be that from doubt at length
Truth may stand forth unmoved of change."

We ought to be unsettled if we have settled
down when we should be on the go.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONFESSION OF THE CHURCH

THE church is consecrated to the truth. This is an exalted claim; but if we believed anything short of that, we should be ashamed to own membership in it. The church is not perfect, but it is "groaning so to be." It is often wrong, but it is wrong not for *hate* of truth but for *want* of it.

The extent to which the church blames itself is eloquent proof of its profound belief in its capacity for great things. During the recent years it became a habitual thing with a certain class of writers to record the charge that the church had failed to prevent the conflict which our country so mightily helped to bring to a glorious consummation. But in all this criticism there was clearly implied the belief that the church could and should do great things. In spite of the failures it has made and the failings it now has, it has demonstrated its great worth. "The church has made many mistakes, but on her altar the fire has

never utterly gone out, and in her fellowship the faith of multitudes has been kindled." It has surrendered and neglected and hesitated much, but, on the whole, the Christian Church has persistently carried forward the task to which the Master set himself. It is still very far behind him, but it is trying hard to learn what he wishes done.

Our love of truth is responsible for the confusion we are in. We shall not stay confused. Truth has "brought us out that it might bring us in." We are having the growing pains of a larger life. They are not comfortable, but appear necessary.

One step in this process is apparent and heartening. The Spirit of truth is guiding us out of confusion by guiding us into confession. The church is on its face before God. Sections of it may still feel self-sufficient and self-righteous, but the *modern* church is learning to humble itself. Consider what this means. The church has been arrogant, proud, domineering. It has been a dictator, not only in the ecclesiastical world, but also in social and political realms. But now, one of its great prophets offers up this prayer in its behalf: "God, we pray for thy church, which is set

to-day amid the perplexities of a changing order. . . . When we judge her by the mind of her Master, we bow in pity and contrition. O, baptize her afresh in the life-giving spirit of Jesus."¹ This prayer is characteristic of the modern attitude of the church. It does not boast that it never changes. It asserts a profound conviction that it *must* change. It is genuinely sorry for the scarred record it has. It remembers with regret how long it gave itself to self-aggrandizement. It knows that all too long it has claimed for itself an authority which it did not possess. It recalls how shamelessly it has demanded of its followers that they say "Credo" to every edict of its councils, and how often it has exacted from them the attitude implied in the name of the Moslem world—"I submit." The modern church is putting an end to the idea that the church is an end in itself.

The church has more to confess than this misuse of its power as an *organization*. It bewails its shortcomings as a *teacher*. It acknowledges how often its theology has been a deterrent to its spiritual life. Candor com-

¹Prayers of the Social Awakening, by Walter Rauschenbusch. The Pilgrim Press, Boston, Massachusetts.

pels it to admit what a terribly warped view of the Jesus of history its theories have fostered. It knows that the unselfish gospel committed to it was denuded to a mere selfish attainment—that religion was cheapened down to conformity to theological tests. It is repentant for having bestowed its praise upon men who, with closed minds, championed an iron-cast theory of the Bible, while it cast out as heretics those who brought reverent scholarship to the study of the Great Book. One evidence that the church brings forth fruits worthy of repentance is that it is now learning to honor those who come with open minds to the open Bible.

The church confesses, moreover, that it has come far short of its *task*. No finer word has been spoken concerning the mission of the church than the lofty utterance of Professor W. A. Brown, to which we have alluded before: "The primary object of the church is to keep alive in the world the consciousness of God as the supreme fact of human life." But the church realizes, with Professor Vedder, that it has been "all too long content with being teacher of the world," and that its task is "not merely educational or inspirational, but

one of practical leadership." If it is asserted that "the supreme work of the church is to make the human heart right," and that "this is the one thing she has been given to do," it replies that no organization can consistently make human hearts right and leave conditions wrong. The church realizes that it must practice what it preaches or lose its own soul. When Napoleon saw in a great cathedral finely wrought silver statues of the twelve apostles arranged in twelve niches over the high altar, he turned to an adjutant and said, "Take them down; melt them; turn them into coin, and let them imitate their Master by going about doing good." The church dares no longer say, "Lord, Lord," unless it is also willing to do the things which he says. It feels that it has too often said "Listen," and too seldom "Follow." The church is in sackcloth and ashes over its failure to approximate more nearly the life of its Lord.

Not the least sin to which the church is obliged to confess is the inconsistency of its creeds and its deeds. Time was when students of human nature sectioned off the human mind. They tried to shut "faculties" up in watertight compartments. But that day of

departmentalizing is gone. "Interaction" is the great word now; when human relations are spoken of we hear the significant word "co-operation." We are learning that we cannot classify the church in any such way as mental science was classified in the days preceding psychology. We are discovering that we cannot put the church in a pigeonhole of the universe with its name duly marked upon it. Except the church is all-pervasive as the sunlight, it is hid under a bushel. To concentrate its heat may mean fiery destruction, but never balmy growth. The function of the church cannot be limited to either the impression or the expression of Christianity; it must include both. We regret that the church has made such large claims for itself as the teacher of the gospel, while it has done so little to assume leadership in saviourhood. The longer we look out upon the world through the eyes of Jesus, the more are we mastered of the conviction that creeds that choke life, that rob life of joy or fullness, must be done away. The modern church will tolerate no creeds save those that make for abundant life.

It may well be questioned whether the church of to-day has not overdone the matter of

repenting its failings or its failures. Still, new members have the right to know the reasons for its penitence. We have passed by many choice opportunities. Sometimes, like the priest and the Levite, we have passed by on the other side and sometimes we have gone down another street. Nothing weighs more heavily on our consciences than that sometimes we have allowed ourselves to become identified with oppressive wealth. We have now taken to heart the estrangement of multitudes of workingpeople and are earnestly at work to make amends for this dark page of our history.

Perhaps you have noticed that, unconsciously, we drifted from the impersonal to the personal term for the church. This is as it should be. For who is the church but *we*? And we of the modern church do not exonerate ourselves at the expense of the past. Many of the past faults persist and some have been created by the very things upon which we counted to deliver us from the older ills. There is less excuse now than ever for clinging to doctrines and traditions out of which the breath of life departed long ago. We acknowledge our sins and we face the light!

CHAPTER V

THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH

THE question of the authority of the church is a much-mooted one and by no means settled. Ponderous volumes have been written on it, and the end of them is not yet. There is great diversity of opinion concerning it. Without entering into the intricacies of the question, three views may be noticed.

There is, of course, the view that the church has no authority at all. This view comes either from passive indifference or hostile opposition to the church. To one the church is unnecessary and has no meaning for life. To another the church means all that ruthless power, political trickery and consummate crookedness betoken to us. We usually underestimate the number of those who look at the church this way. Only recently the church has awakened to the fact that, whatever the follies of this view, there is in it a moral indignation significantly akin to that which the church, at best, stands for. There is still

another class that denies the church any authority. It is composed of devout people who mistake religious Bolshevism for freedom of worship. We of the church are painfully aware of their presence.

When you go to the other extreme, as represented by the Roman Catholic Church, you encounter the view that the church is the supreme authority. Doctrinally, this may be advocated as a theocracy, but practically it makes for a hierarchy. The monarch of the church is monarch of the state. Those worlds within the world—the economic and political realms—must surrender to it. The reason for all this is that the church is God's supreme representative in the world. When it speaks, he speaks. The ultimate seat of authority is in the church, and the ultimate authority of the church is its living head. There is nothing left for the world but to obey the church. The question raised is not "Are you modern?" but "Are you orthodox?" You may make modernism the subject of your anathemas. Would you write poetry? Make tradition your theme. According to this view, the church is not to serve the world; the world must serve the church. It has the last word.

Then there is the middle view, according to which the church has some authority. This view admits of endless variety as to the degree of the authority. It is precisely this that is so ardently discussed. With this view we are chiefly concerned. For it is that of the modern church member.

Now, whatever may be the differences among the members of the church to-day, relative to some phases of the question of authority, there are certain convictions common to us all. These, to our thought, make a mighty apology for church membership. To a consideration of these we now turn.

The church is being humanized. This is not said to deny the sublime claim it makes for its origin. We believe that God is back of it, and is with it, and shall be with it until "he presents it spotless." This is said to record a fact of great importance. Whatever the church may have been to the thought of preceding generations, to-day "it is not a person in the Godhead." It is gloriously—and, sometimes, ingloriously—human. It was said some years ago: "The churches of Christ are always in danger of losing their humanity. They try hard to be great ecclesiastical organ-

izations instead of homes; to become imposing officials rather than spiritual fathers and mothers; to sharpen the wits of philosophers in the creation of theological systems, instead of quickening the sense of human friendship and enriching men by love. It is easier far to keep our theology than our humanity, our creeds than our sympathetic and glowing fellowships." We have not advanced so fast that we can afford to disregard this warning altogether, but it is not so necessary to utter it as it once was. The church is being humanized. This too has Protestantism done for the church. If a new creed for the church member were formulated, one of its first articles would surely read like this: "Nothing human is foreign to me."

The outstanding result of this humanizing process is that people are losing their fear of the clergy. If this fear is supplanted by wholesome respect for this noblest profession, much is gained and nothing worthy is lost. Ministers of the church are no longer thought of as owning the copyright on the truths basic to religion. Lord Bacon's opinion that "there are two books: the book of nature and the book of God; one is open to everybody, the

other to priests alone," finds little support in the modern church. Thus the great fundamentals of the Christian faith are being resurrected out of the pit of technicality into which they had fallen. They are being interpreted in terms whose meaning no one need mistake. When we say that the church has lost its fear of the clergy, we must not forget that the clergy itself has been deliberately responsible for the loss of this fear. They have been eager for the spread of the truth and have disregarded the consequences this might have as to their standing. The modern church is under lasting obligation to such men as Harry Emerson Fosdick, William DeWitt Hyde, and Henry C. Sheldon, to name but a few of the modern prophets who have cleared away the debris of obscurity from truths that should always have been clear and vivid to all. Glaring falsehoods and irrelevant doctrines are sure to reveal their ugliness when they emerge from the camouflage of professionalism, and that goes a long way toward making the church human. There have always been leaders in the church who were ahead of their times, but a distinctive result of the humanizing of the church is that we are de-

veloping in it many who are ahead of their church.

The outstanding danger of making the church human, as we saw, is that we shall underestimate the value of the church. The outstanding gain of making the church human is that its authority now is based, not on fear, but on love. The modern measure of greatness is not that one shall be an authority *over*, but that one shall be an authority *on*. The concern of the modern member is that the church shall be an authority *on* man's needs rather than *over* man's creeds. We are beginning to sense the full meaning of those great words in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians: "Not that we have lordship over your faith, but are helpers of your joy."

It is just here that the pinch comes for the modern man. To use another's splendid remark, he resents having any one flash a creed in his face like a revolver, with the demand that he throw up his intellectual hands. And it is on this point that the modern church member has a strong conviction.

His church must have the same attitude toward its members, or toward those who desire to unite with it, as the early church had.

It is refreshing to look away from the elaborate rituals still used by our churches for the reception of members to the picture of the early church given in the New Testament. The early church knew but one requirement for admission. *Possession of the spirit of Jesus* was looked for. That alone entitled one to membership. Nothing else mattered. What pity that the church ever deviated from this high standard! Some very great men have been guilty of lowering it. "There is but one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies," said John Wesley, "a desire to flee from the wrath to come and to be saved from their sins." Such a self-centered and individualistic statement, even if it did not foster, surely did nothing to destroy the all-too-prevalent notion that church membership, as such, has saving power. The modern church does not believe either in baptismal or ecclesiastical regeneration. To it church membership does not result *in* salvation; it results *from* salvation.

Our aversion to Wesley's requirement is considerably softened, however, when we observe in it that he expected membership in his societies to result, not from agreement to doc-

trines, but from *an inner experience*. This was the thing looked for by the early church. When certain brethren at Ephesus accosted Paul with the information that they were "believers," the question that came from his lips had nothing to do with standards of doctrine. Many a pastor, weary with asking prescribed questions and weary of listening to prescribed answers, is heart-hungry to ask once again that dynamic question to those men: "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?" Church councils went contrary to New Testament standards when they sacrificed fundamentals to formulas. For, as Bishop McConnell has said: "Doctrines, organizations, rules of conduct are but the means of grace; that is, tools for the furtherance of the Christian life. There is nothing sacred in the eyes of the church except the *religious experience* of its members, and this experience has right of way over all considerations whatsoever." Clifford, one of the great British preachers, says that "the real church is the company of those who have God's forgiving love in their hearts and bestow it on their fellow men." Or, to quote older and even sublimer words, the church is the company of those who "en-

deavor to *lead* [not merely follow, but lead] a new life, following the commandments of God."

There can be no mistaking that the modern church is exceedingly impatient with where the emphasis has been put. When it is argued that its rituals have not yet been adjusted to the higher position, we reply that he is indeed blind to the signs of the times who does not see beyond the letter to the spirit of the modern church. Purity of purpose will be exalted, and doctrines will become, not the master, but the servant of the church.

But when the church opens its doors to a wider fellowship by its refusal to give creed the emphasis previously placed upon it, it does not follow that the church has surrendered all authority in the matter of creed. A deal of confusion has been occasioned by the use of the word "creed" for vastly different ideas. In a very true sense, nothing could be farther from the truth than the popular statement that to-day "a life, not a creed" is the test of candidacy. Dr. C. H. Parkhurst, criticizing Mr. Rockefeller's use of this phrase, says: "Creed is the underlying stratum upon which are superimposed all our legitimate

moral and spiritual activities. Conduct has to be guaranteed by character. . . . Love gets its warrant from some underlying conviction. . . . If our love is a reasonable and therefore commendable love, it is because of our *belief* in man; it is because it is a part of our Christian *creed* that the human is deserving of human affection as it is of God's affection." It ill becomes us, with the memory of the war fresh in our minds, to be tolerant of cheap talk that exalts deeds to the disparagement of creeds. We have had ample chance to see that, given the wrong creed, our great deeds may undo us. We have seen that "the crash of worlds" is more likely to result from the wreck of ideals than from "the wreck of matter." Under a false creed the chemicals intended to blast man's way into the secrets of the earth are utilized to blast him from off the face of the earth. Under one creed man, impelled by love of service, finds his way through the dizzy heights of the sky; under another, the cruel of heart stealthily journey there, and sleeping babies never again open their eyes to our world, and resting mothers wake not again to live for those whom they love, for the murder that rains down from the foe.

Under one creed man masters nautical motor power, that scattered continents may be scattered no more; under another creed it lurks under the deep to slay him as he travels on the waves. The war has been a great teacher. None of its lessons stands out more clearly than this: creed may make or unmake life.

When a man speaks to us of creed, therefore, it behooves us to inquire what he means by it. There is a radical element in the modern church which wants all the bars down. It disregards the need for *a central belief of the meaning of God and man*. The Christian Church has a right to *insist* that this belief shall characterize its members. Unified personality is a commonplace of psychology. How, then, can one have the *spirit* of Christ who has not the *mind* of Christ? So, the Christian Church has a right to demand that its members hold the Christian view of life, divine and human. Indeed, the Christian Church has a right to demand that *all men* everywhere shall hold the Christian view of God and man. *Herein lies its authority*. The Christian Church has the *right* to ask the same question its Master so earnestly and so constantly asked: "Do you believe?" It should be a sorry day

for the Christian Church were this question paralyzed on its lips. John Oxenham admirably summarizes the matter:

“Not what, but Whom, I do believe,
That, in my darkest hour of need,
Hath comfort that no mortal creed
To mortal man may give;
Not what, but Whom!
For Christ is more than all the creeds,
And his full life of gentle deeds
Shall all the creeds outlive.
Not what I do believe, but Whom!
Who walks beside me in the gloom?
Who shares the burden wearisome?
Who all the dim way doth illumine
And bids me look beyond the tomb
The larger life to live?
Not what I do believe,
But Whom!
Not what,
But Whom!”¹

Faith in Christ, possession of his Spirit—upon these the Christian Church must speak with authority or cease to be Christian.

This much said—and it cannot be said too strongly—the shifting of the church’s demand

¹ Bees in Amber, John Oxenham. The American Tract Society, Publishers, New York City.

from conformity to creeds to purity of purpose throws some new light on the question of church membership. The modern member does not feel that one needs to wait until all the uncertainties concerning the church's teachings are made clear and all questions settled. One may join the church when he is most conscious of these. "If a man is entirely satisfied with any existing church, it is either to be hoped that he will not enter it, and if he is such already, that he will hasten to leave. He will hinder and hamper its advance, and be in matters ecclesiastical that hopeless factor whom in political life we label as a stand-patter." And, continues this observant minister, Henry Sloane Coffin: "There is no inconsistency in worshiping and working, or even occupying a position of leadership in a communion with whose creed or ritual or methods one is not in full sympathy. That was Jesus's condition in the Jewish Church, and a Christian can well be as inconsistent as his Lord. The point is that church membership is not an optional responsibility which a follower of Jesus may or may not assume; he cannot follow his Lord and refuse to contribute the inspiration of his personality to the social

group which is functioning collectively for the Kingdom.”¹

We have not begun to say all that should be said on this matter of authority. We feel constrained to mention, in passing, the need for some authoritative word on the part of the church concerning the attendance of its members upon services for worship. It is a dangerous fallacy to reason that, because the church is a voluntary organization, therefore membership in it entails no definite obligation. Somehow church members must come to feel that they have not only a privilege but that they have a duty in the church. We sing,

“Like a mighty army
Moves the church of God.”

When one thinks of the authority exercised by and in our army—which has so gallantly waged the battle for humanity on French soil—we wonder what the church would accomplish if only it asserted more authority over those who are fighting in its ranks. We also wonder whether, out of respect for mere

¹ University Sermons, by Henry Sloane Coffin. Yale University Press, Publishers, New Haven, Connecticut.

truth, we ought to continue singing these words. But we forego further comment.

The authority of the modern church is a spiritual one. It has a right to demand that its members shall have the Christian view of life. It has no right to demand that its members shall have the church's view of theology. And the modern church *knows* that it has no right to demand that. It holds that the important thing is not that you shall share the opinion of a church but that you shall share the spirit of the Master. The church's doors are wide open for all who feel

"That Christ has given me birth,
To brother all the sons of earth."¹

No such need remain without. What high-purposed man or woman will not want to do his or her "bit" for the Christian Church in its efforts to publish the good news of the Kingdom everywhere? In this respect also the church has authority; authority to say: "These things we know his Spirit writes on truly awakened hearts."

Well may we say:

¹"The Everlasting Mercy," from *Collected Poems of John Masefield*.
The Macmillan Company, Publishers, New York City.

"I have a life in Christ to live,
I have a death in Christ to die;
And must I wait till science give
All doubts a full reply?
Nay, rather, while the sea of doubt
Is raging wildly round about,
Questioning of life, and death, and sin,
Let me but creep within
Thy fold, O Christ, and at thy feet
Take but the lowest seat,
And hear thine awful voice repeat
In gentlest accents, heavenly sweet,
'Come unto me and rest;
Believe me and be blest.' "

CHAPTER VI

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

"WHAT the world wants to know about our religion," said Silvester Horne, "is not so much that it is reasonable as that it is real." Bishop Oldham, a modern hero who combines saintliness with statesmanship, called the delegates of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church to "a church life so sincere, so all pervaded with the Christ that it will be a joy to transport the humblest church in America and put it down before the eyes of the heathen world and say, 'There, that is what Jesus Christ does.'"

This is our ideal. We can be content with nothing less. The worst obstruction in the way of its attainment is the divisions by which the church is rent. They are an eyesore to the world. They must surely and deeply hurt Him who prayed "that they all may be one." A divided church is incompatible with the Christian view of life.

To be sure, plausible reasons can be ad-

vanced to explain our lack of unity. The psychological differences among us are pointed to as responsible for the existence of denominations. We are reminded of the national origin of various churches. History reveals valid reasons for the birth of some of them. We cannot but applaud those intrepid souls who, unwilling to submit to tyranny in high places, formed bodies in which freedom found more congenial soil.

But not one nor all of these reasons go to prove that the church should continue to be separated. In this day when nations are allies for democracy shall not churches be allies for Christianity? One thing the war has taught us is that we shall not be effective in the warfare with sin unless there be a unified command. In a new sense the church universal must say, "Lead on, O King Eternal," else the sons of this world shall once again have proved themselves wiser than the sons of light.

The modern church member, therefore, is deeply concerned for the unity of the church. He welcomes such a movement as that represented by the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America and enthusiastically sup-

ports it in its efforts to rally varying denominations around common standards. There is nothing the church needs to learn so much as *solidarity*. Many workingmen read a whole creed in this word. We need to read a gospel in it. The church can never hope to be the Moses to lead humanity forth from the house of bondage without it.

Modern members have no misgivings on this subject. They see that unity does not reduce the church to one viewpoint. Much of the confusion within the church is due to the failure to realize that there is room for diverse opinions in the church. The church is not limited to one type of biblical interpretation or to one form of church government. "Men with a wide variety of viewpoint and interpretation have a right within the Christian Church, and every Christian must be left to answer to Christ for his belief." The church is to be not one-sided but one-aimed.

And unity does not reduce the church to one class. A church composed of people on one social level (and consider how common this is!) may have exclusiveness, but will never make for unity. A church confined to an

intellectual aristocracy has the place of its heart usurped by its head. A church that caters only to wealth has the great gulf fixed. As Harry F. Ward significantly remarks, "When Jesus comes preaching the gospel to the poor, there are no pew rents to pay." So long as a man may be a traitor to one church while another church welcomes him with open arms because of his social standing or because he brings a well-filled pocketbook along, the barest outline of solidarity is not to be discerned. It is, of course, equally true that a church limited to proletariats has no genius for unity. Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free—the church must have room for all.

Nor does unity reduce the church to one method. No one type of evangelistic effort can be insisted upon. No hard-and-fast rule is to be laid down for the conduct of services. There is to be no slavery to precedent. "Each in his own way"—so runs the creed of the modern member.

Unity, so far from reducing the church to something one-sided, one-sectioned, one-systemed, *elevates the church to one spirit*. It means to

“Break down the old dividing walls
Of sect, and rivalry, and schism,
And heal the body of Thy Christ
With anoint of Thy chrism.”¹

The pathway to the ideal lies through the practical. When denominationalism tends to competition rather than cooperation; when it makes for the overlapping of forces and the waste of energy; when it withholds the power of united impact and obscures the end in the means, it has outlived its usefulness. Dr. Edward Park used to say that early theology in New England was divided into four groups: Calvinist, Calvinistic, Calvinistical, and Calvinisticalish. The distinctions which hold some denominations apart to-day appear equally ridiculous.

This is why practical men have set themselves to the task of church union. The modern member is in full sympathy with them in this. Still, he will not be blind to the fact that some unions do not mean harmony, as our divorce courts sadly testify. It is better to have unity in variety than union with discord. The important thing is not that there

¹“Break Down the Walls,” in *The Fiery Cross*, by John Oxenham. Copyright, 1918, by George H. Doran Company, Publishers, New York City.

shall be one denomination, but that the denominations shall be one.

Moreover, church union is fraught with problems which the uninitiated have not the least suspicion of. To form an idea of the magnitude of the issues involved one should read, for instance, the accounts of the attempts of the Methodist Episcopal Churches, North and South, to effect union. For all they had in common, most surprising difficulties were found.

Nor will the modern member decry denominationalism altogether. It is only when it is inflated and self-centered that it is the enemy of unity. Patriotism offers an analogy. Patriotism may deteriorate into Prussianism or it may mean world-democracy, which is Americanism. Denominationalism may narrow down to mere bigotry or it may expand to world-citizenship. The modern church member will be relentless with denominational snobbery. "He will have the feeling toward his denomination that a soldier has toward his particular company—something a little more intimate than his feeling for the army, yet entirely subordinate to that."¹ No man will further the

¹The Gospel of Good Will, by William DeWitt Hyde. The Macmillan Company, Publishers, New York City.

unity of the church by choosing to remain in ignorance of the peculiar emphases that mark his denomination. It is only as he understands these that he can make an intelligent contribution toward the church at large. He is less likely then to contend for

“The skeleton of a religion lost,
The ghostless bones of what had been divine.”¹

Denominational aloofness has no place in the modern church. The investment of denominational strength has. So also has readiness to “pool” denominational interests for the sake of the common good.

The attempt to attain a union by which unity can be enhanced is eminently worth while. Conditions exist that make closer cooperation and coordination imperative. Startling instances have been exposed of towns with small populations supporting an excessive number of struggling churches. Statistics have been gathered that indicate the seating capacity of our Protestant churches to be out of all proportion to our membership, or even constituency. Facts such as these are but a few

¹ “Sonnets” from Collected Poems of John Masefield. The Macmillan Company, Publishers, New York City.

of the negative reasons why we should get together more. Volumes could be said for the positive reasons. By all means let us have a connectional sense, but never to the exclusion of a correctional sense.

Men who set themselves to the task of church union are not at labor on a useless task. Who dare say that their efforts may not exceed our fondest expectations? And if these men should prove to be but dreamers within the church, they are to be infinitely preferred to the discounters of the church. If men were to judge from the statements of some of its accredited leaders, the church is simply a guilty child, caught with its fingers in the jam! There is such a thing as boasting of penitence; it brings to mind Browning's comment about those who "when the devil stabs them, lend him a knife." The prevalent custom to dwell upon the mistakes of the church, without mention of the high mission of the church, is not conducive either to church unity or church prosperity. The modern church member may blush to speak of the wrongs of the church, but he does not blush to assert the rights of the church. We have not had enough of the ring of conviction in defense

of church membership. There must be the sense of fraternity—of solidarity—among all church members. We meet on common ground in our conviction that the church must be kept alive. Here is one basis—and a very real one—for the realization of church unity.

We have spoken of unity and union. Now another great word comes to mind as pertinent to our discussion: *unction*! The anointing of the Spirit! In that brilliant and potent book, *Essentials of Evangelism*, Oscar L. Joseph speaks of the passionate passion. This suggestive phrase elicits the thought that the church must have the *spiritual spirit*. Nothing short of the Spirit of Jesus can impart this to the church. With all due deference to human efforts, the fact remains that only the Holy Spirit can bring us unity.

Consider what the spirit of patriotism did for our land. How quickly we discarded non-essentials, forgot our differences, “postponed our politics,” and made common cause when the spirit of world-democracy laid hold upon us. If the patriotic spirit could so weld us into unity to “win the war,” would not the Spiritual Spirit weld us into unity to “win the world”? The church will emerge from

pettiness and rise to "the certitude of nobler prosperings" if the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

That person is derelict to his privileges who does not covet earnestly this anointing from on high. He may deem himself modern, but he is modern in the antiquated sense of being up-to-date, not in the vital sense of being up-to-need. It should be a mighty incentive to every high-purposed person outside of the church to unite with it now that it is making stronger efforts than ever before to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Modern members are trying earnestly to hear what the Spirit has to say unto the churches. As many as are led by the Spirit shall lead the church to the heights.

In *The Servant in the House* it is said concerning the church: "When you enter it, you hear a sound as of some mighty poem chanted. Listen long enough and you will learn that it is made up of the beating of human hearts, of the nameless music of men's souls—that is, if you have ears. If you have eyes, you will presently see the church itself—a looming mystery of many shapes and shadows, leaping sheer from floor to dome—the work of no

ordinary builder. The pillars of it go like the brawny trunks of heroes; the sweet human flesh of men and women is molded about its bulwarks, strong, impregnable; the faces of little children laugh out from every cornerstone: the terrible spans and arches of it are the joined hands of comrades; and up in the heights and spaces there are inscribed the numberless musings of all the dreamers of the world. It is yet building—building and built upon. Sometimes the work goes forward in deep darkness; sometimes in blinding light; now beneath the burden of unutterable anguish; now to the tune of a great laughter and heroic shoutings like the cry of thunder. Sometimes in the silence of the nighttime one may hear the tiny hammerings of the comrades at work up in the dome—the comrades that have climbed ahead.”

“The future lies
With those whose eyes
Are wide to the necessities,
And wider still
With fervent will,
To all the possibilities.”¹

¹ “The Goal and the Way,” in *The Vision Splendid*, by John Oxenham. Copyright, 1917, by George H. Doran Company, Publishers, New York City.

To sum up, the modern member discerns the necessity of the church and recognizes the place it ought to hold. Though he realizes that there is much cause for confusion and much more for confession, he acknowledges the authority of the Spirit in its life and seeks its unity in him. What has preceded has dealt with these matters. What shall follow has to do with the part the modern member must play in order that both he and it shall attain unto the best.

PART TWO
CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

CHAPTER VII

LOYALTY

HOWARD A. BRIDGMAN recently wrote: "Democracy is a splendid and vital thing in the church as well as in the state, but when it is interpreted as the right to go to church when you please, pray when you feel like it, give a penny or a dime, whichever happens to be in your pocket; when it practically means an utterly irresponsible attitude toward the approved agencies of the church and toward its time-honored means of grace, then democracy in the church, as well as in the state, is riding for a fall." Arthur J. Balfour devotes many pages of his *Theism and Humanism* to a discussion of loyalty and declares that it is "the great essential." Occasionally men speak of mistaken loyalties. What they mean when they so speak is that they regard the *objects* of such loyalty as wrong. But loyalty itself is never wrong. It is of the essence of the God who always "to his pledged word is true." Jesus wants, not admirers, but adherents. His

disciples are those who, in the day when others "walk no more with him," affirm openly, "Thou hast the words."

Upon one's admission to the church a solemn vow is exacted. However archaic its phraseology may be, it chiefly has to do with loyalty. It is a pledge *before* the church of loyalty *to* the church. It embodies a promise to give reverent attendance upon the appointed means of grace and the public worship of God. It says that to the *measure* of your ability, you will support the church (short measure here is as iniquitous as it is in trade and not one whit less shameful). It affirms that you will promote the welfare of others and advance the Redeemer's kingdom. These, clearly, are the loyalties the Spirit writes on truly awakened hearts. No one can have the Christian view of life and neglect one of these. The church has simply indexed them for emphasis. Just why some folks seem to look upon their oaths to fraternal organizations as more binding than church vows is a mystery. Perhaps our vows are not administered in a sufficiently impressive way. But what they lack in pomp they make up in importance. Save only the oath to one's country, nothing is comparable

to it. The time can never come when church members shall articulate their affection for the church in other speech than that of loyalty rooted in faith. "If they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them."

It is with the first of these loyalties that we should first concern ourselves. Loyalty to worship! Loyalty, in the first place, to the *principle* of worship. Much is said these days of morale. The recent war has demonstrated the importance of it. With that gone, all is lost. No church member will gainsay the statement that the church must keep up the morale of the world. Morale is not merely to "keep a stiff upper lip"; it is to keep a clear inner light. Home fires are kept burning only when heart fires burn undimmed. Men are steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the works of the Lord only when they are *positive* that their work is not in vain in the Lord. Back of morale in the service is patriotism. Back of morale in the world is worship.

P. W. Wilson, in *The Christ We Forget*,¹ observes that in his wilderness temptation our Lord "was asked to choose right service by

¹ Fleming H. Revell Company, Publisher, New York City.

the aid of wrong worship; and, without an instant of hesitation, he set worship first." This is a suggestive statement. Anyone who makes worship secondary is guilty of wrong worship. For then *he distorts life*. Emerson said, "Religious worship is the most important single function of any people." Paul observed this long ago: "That in all things, he might have the preeminence." When worship has not first place it is out of place.

Loyalty to worship includes loyalty to *the Lord's Day*. Henry Churchill King wrote: "The careless indifference with which entire classes of society, in their devotion to the pleasure of week-ends, are willing to jeopardize the whole great institution of the Sabbath, is simply another illustration of selfish lawlessness. One needs to be no ascetic to see that the conversion of our Sundays into simple pleasure-seeking, however innocent in itself, is an immense loss to all the deeper forces that go to the making of any civilization deserving the name. Educated men and women, at least, may be asked to do thinking enough not heedlessly to barter one of the great spiritual achievements of the race for a couple of days of house-parties and auto riding and golf.

Are we going to lose all sense of proportionate values?"¹ An alarming lack of appreciation of the value of the Lord's Day prevails among church members. In our revolt against narrow, legalistic Sabbath observance we have swung to another extreme in which lurks far more subtle dangers. "I despair of destroying religion while millions meet together for worship on the first day of each week," was Voltaire's plaint. With this day gone, the life of the Spirit is stifled. With this day disregarded, our religion is undermined. The Sabbath was made *for* man, not *against* man. It must minister to his highest cravings. Any use of this day that militates against the ministry of this day militates against the highest good of man. Its dedication to the life of the Spirit must be kept inviolate. Whoever and whatsoever invades its sanctity harms the spirit of worship. Modern church members can afford to be very old-fashioned in regard to the Lord's Day. We rightly object to an unchristian social order because it denies man the time necessary for the cultivation of the spiritual. For the Christian

¹ "Fundamental Questions," by Henry Churchill King. The Macmillan Company, Publishers, New York City.

view of life is that the spiritual is supreme. Can the church, then, tolerate a reduction or perversion of the all-too-brief time allotted to the distinctly spiritual? No man or woman, responsive to the need of the hour, can be party to the dethronement of this day. Every church member should give wholehearted support to the Lord's Day Alliance. This organization is not a reversion to casuistry; it is blazing the path for a to-morrow in which the spiritual shall get adequate recognition. The notable triumphs achieved by it are a guarantee that, given such financial support as shall multiply its effectiveness, it will sturdily stand sentinel against all things alien to the spirit of worship.

Loyalty to worship also means loyalty to the *house of worship*. In that charming little book, *Why Men Pray*,¹ by Charles Lewis Slattery, this thrilling word picture is to be found: "If you stand at the door of a city church in a crowded thoroughfare and watch the people who go in, you will discover that now and then a man enters, apparently not to pray, but to peer anxiously into an unknown place.

¹ "Why Men Pray." The Macmillan Company, Publishers, New York City.

He glances at the notice boards, then at the open door, and, as by a mere whim, he enters. But as he crosses the threshold and looks into the empty church, an expression comes upon his face which shows the awe of surprise. The contrast with the noise and confusion of the street, the peace and beauty, may explain his look, in part. It may impress him to see here and there a kneeling figure. *But what pulls at his heartstrings is the sense that this is a place of worship.* The place seems to be filled with worshipers even when it is physically empty. If the man has imagination, he begins to think of all the good men and women who have in the past loved this spot and have looked to it as *the place where their souls were most conscious of God's presence.* Dead they may have been for years, but in some way the old church seems still to be filled with their lives. . . . One is reminded of Westcott, the great Bishop of Durham, who often went into the dark and silent cathedral at night, remembering, as he sat or knelt, all the saints who had worshiped there through the long history of Durham, and feeling that they were there with him, in *the spot which both they and he loved best of all earthly places."*

While God may be worshiped in a barn, there is no valid reason why we should be content with that. Worship is worth-ship; it has to do with the value we place on God. In a vital way the building we dedicate to God expresses our valuation of him. With due consideration for the means at our command, the houses of worship we build are public acknowledgments of how much God is worth to us. The person who has never invested money in a church building—either at home or in lands afar—should do considerable pondering as to whom or what his *money* (and thus *he*) is worshipping.

When the lion-hearted but impetuous Luther and other leaders of the Reformation unqualifiedly rejected the adornments and æsthetic characteristics of the church of their day, they did not see in their hot haste that they were rejecting the very thing about which God's commandments had been so explicit and minute to the Old Testament church. Modern psychology shows that the Israelites were right in this obedience. A beautiful church is an aid to worship; it inculcates reverence; it expresses reverence; for certain types of people it is indispensable. The difficulty encountered

here is that beauty is often mistaken for truth. We must be on guard lest the æsthetic take the place of the spiritual. The æsthetic should be the vehicle by which the spiritual is conveyed to the throne of our hearts. Every church building should verify the statement of the psalmist:

"How amiable are thy tabernacles,
O Jehovah of hosts!"

Loyalty to worship means loyalty to the *services for worship*. This brings us to the subject of church attendance, a subject which the modern member cannot lightly dismiss. When we see it in a new light we shall give it the old loyalty. The twentieth-century challenge of individualism must be applied to it. If church attendance is merely a matter of self-satisfaction, attendance upon the services may be governed by our moods. But worship is social. Church attendance is a matter of self-investment. We *may* go to church to *get* good, but we *must* go to church to *do* good. Our presence is not simply in order that *our* religion may be maintained, but in order that *religion* may be maintained. The inspiration and example we set is as important

as the inspiration and example we get. We sanctify ourselves for others' sakes.

Has a church member the right to go and hear "the best preaching," or ought he to be loyal to his own church services? No one will wish to face this question in a dogmatic spirit. The question might be raised as to what constitutes "best preaching." The question should be raised whether worship *outside* of his church is *socially* as effective as worship *in* his own church. Does it promote the welfare of others, or advance the Redeemer's kingdom? By the law of divine reversals, no one who feeds others starves himself. When you help the church, the church helps you. Moreover, "rushing to hear popular preachers is one of the most subtle forms of selfishness."

Just because worship is social, no individual can develop the capacity for deepest worship without loyalty to it. "As the years, the decades, the generations pass, the man and the family that unite in public worship will become very different from the man and the family that do not reenforce the chance promptings of the heart by this systematic means. One can be so much better a Christian with than without such aid that he who delib-

erately neglects it, choosing, as he does, less rather than more of the power of Good Will over his life, finds the little Christianity that he has fast slipping away from him and spiritual bankruptcy staring him in the face.”¹ So cautions William DeWitt Hyde; while Dr. Coffin reminds us of the example of our Lord in this regard: “There were many portions of the church’s recognized Scriptures which he considered outworn and inadequate representations of God. He must often have been bored by dull and unenlightened sermons. Some of the church’s leaders did not command his respect, and many of his fellow worshipers must have seemed insincere and uninspiring. But he did not depend upon his own Bible-reading and private communion with God for the development of his spirit. The fellowship of kindred souls and the stimulus of social worship were to him essential for his religious vitality.... If the Son of God could not do without the inspiration which came to him from the Jewish Church, it is surely not likely that a modern Christian can maintain his spiritual life at its utmost vigor without con-

¹The Gospel of Good Will. The Macmillan Company, Publishers, New York City.

stant contact with the Christian Church, which, however faulty, is certainly no faultier than the church Jesus knew.”¹

It is sometimes said that we have too many church services, but that the church does not render service enough. The latter statement is not to be disputed. The modern church confesses as its ruling idea that of service; though it may be observed, in passing, that in its definition of service it does not allow social service to be divorced from religious service. As to the service it now renders, to quote Professor F. Watson Hannan’s keen remark, it is not so much satisfied or dissatisfied, as *unsatisfied*. The statement that we have too many church services overlooks the fact that church services *render service*. They furnish the power for the work at hand. If men got more power, they could do better work.

Psychology makes much of the “time element.” We must be exposed to some things a long time before we catch their power. You cannot master a language in a day or grasp a philosophy overnight. It takes time.

¹ University Sermons. Yale University Press, Publishers, New Haven, Connecticut.

So with religion. We need to be exposed to it a long time. Wordsworth was right: "The world is too much with us." We must take time to be holy (one who has heard Professor Curtis never forgets his insistence on holy as "whole"). What with our rush of business and hurricance of world interests, do we not need more time than the few hours we have at best, to stimulate the spiritual? "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand." The same ratio does not maintain itself for an *hour* "in thy courts."

The modern church member must, therefore, abound in loyalty to the services of the church. It is not all pessimism or sarcasm when we are told by Dr. Macfarland: "The fathers braved the angry waters of an ocean for the sake of truth and religion. Their offspring will not go to hear the truth or seek religion, be the Sunday morning sky relieved by a cloud the size of their hand, and dare not, for religious worship, brave an April shower. They sat for hours and listened with intellectual alertness and spiritual earnestness to a sermon on the attributes of God. Their sons and daughters must have sermonettes, not more than twenty minutes, and not too deep,

profound, or intellectual.”¹ The modern church member may well emulate Him who “entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue, on the sabbath day.” In that old hymnal which shall be always new are words that shall always be true: “Blessed are they that *dwell* in thy house. . . . They go from strength to strength.” The modern member can permit no one, least of all himself, to detract in the slightest degree from the glory of the principle, the Day, the House, the Services of worship.

Have we the moral courage to adjust our lives to these high loyalties? Consider that it may mean an upheaval of your habits of life! It may mean an entire reversal of your Sunday programs! It may mean the incorporating of an emphatic “No” in your vocabulary! Are we brave enough to declare and defend these loyalties? Do we stand ready to assert our allegiance to worship at any time?

In your reading of the book of Revelation has it seemed strange that the grim procession of those who are on their way to “the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone” is

¹ Christian Service in the Modern World. Fleming H. Revell Company, Publishers, New York City.

headed, not by the polluted, the criminal, the unspeakables of life, but by the cowards and unfaithful? To one who thinks, this can occasion no surprise. Loyalty is essential to everything worth while. This is why we may confidently look forward to a tightening of the demands for loyalty in respect to church membership. But is not spontaneous loyalty best of all?

CHAPTER VIII

PUBLIC WORSHIP

To a thoughtless person it may seem like slavery for one to bind oneself with an oath of loyalty to worship, but to one who thinks, regular attendance upon church service will appear like bravery rather than slavery. Aside from the fact that one who attends church *regularly* endures hardship as a good soldier in being patient with bad singing and poor ventilation and some poor preaching, he constantly exposes himself to great moral and spiritual ideals. Unquestionably there are those who stay away from church because they dislike meeting great truths face to face. They have the same fear which made Lord Peterborough withdraw from Fénelon's presence, saying, "I was obliged to get away from him or he would have made me religious in spite of myself." A man who regularly comes to hear the demands which Jesus makes upon his life is a hero compared with the man who says he is good enough, but has not the cour-

age to come to the place where his much-boasted goodness will be measured and analyzed and weighed by those who specialize in the architecture of character.

It is in the sermon that one is most likely to be confronted with these Christian challenges. The central item in Protestant worship is the sermon. We must not regard other parts of the services as inconsequential. Yet, ordinarily, the sermon is the chief part of the service.

"I say the pulpit (in the sober use
Of its legitimate, peculiar powers)
Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,
The most important and effective guard,
Support and ornament of virtue's cause."

What, then, shall be our attitude toward the sermon?

Essential to this is our attitude toward the preacher. "Let it never be forgotten," said Sylvester Horne in *The Romance of Preaching*, "that modern America sprang out of the ideal relation between a pastor and a church; a man of God and a people of God." Two other statements in this connection are worthy of being committed to memory by every

member: "We shall have no ideal preachers in the pulpit until we have ideal hearers in the pew"; "The atmosphere of faith and prayer does make good preaching inevitable, whereas the attitude of suspicion and criticism will freeze the genial current of the soul." When our Lord went to church he was not always the speaker of the day. More often, probably, he went as "the divine layman," receiving the message proclaimed with reverence and eagerness of heart. He did not go to find fault; he went to find faith.

A recent newspaper editorial dealt with the value of sermons and made the point that it is ~~is~~ a rare sermon that does not either contain quotations from great masters or call attention to massive truths. The educational value of sermons is small compared with the devotional, spiritual value of them. But either is made impossible by the critical attitude that reduces the preaching of the Word to mere measurements of grammar, style, and logic. No sane preacher will disregard these; but for any listener to measure the preaching of divine verities by intellectual niceties is like measuring an ocean with a thimble. We must listen for words of eternal life.

Preaching is the proclamation of the good news of the Kingdom and not of the new goods of the brain. Again, preaching dare not be thoughtless (there must not be deep sermons for saints and shallow sermons for sinners), but the demand that all preaching shall be novel is contrary to the purpose of preaching. If it be art, it is art for God's sake. Preaching can "bring our conviction to certainty," but it may merely "give our conviction a clinch"—the need for which Browning recognized. A man complained that his pastor's preaching was not "restful" to him. When the pastor heard it he said, "Well, it ought to be; he sleeps through nearly all my sermons." It is better for a sermon to act as a sleeping powder than as a soothing syrup; that is, while preaching should comfort us in sorrow, it should never allow us to be comfortable in sin. True preaching can only let us rest when we have done our best; until then it is best not to let us rest.

There is an incident in the life of Jesus that ought to be suggestive to us. When he visited Nazareth he was invited to speak in the synagogue. At first he created a most favorable impression, but when he insisted that

the revered passages to which they had listened should be made part of everyday life, when he challenged their small souls with the vast expanse of godly character, they arose in wrath and sought to lay hold on him. Have we progressed far beyond these Nazarenes? We are all of us ready to say fine things of the men who conduct services beautifully, who speak in well-rounded sentences, and whose words, like sweet music, fall upon our ears. But what can we say for our estimate of them when they speak boldly of our pet sins, when they assail our choice morsels of selfrighteousness and portray to us the stony flesh of our unregenerate hearts? Do we not resemble all too often those folks who praised the preacher for his beauty and then wanted to kill him for his truth?

We should never forget that, unless we bring to the sanctuary a "sharply defined sense of God," we are likely to be critical toward the sermon and the service. Those who go with the determination to hear "what the Lord our God doth say unto us" are seldom disappointed. It has often been said that "with its preaching, Christianity stands or falls." We shall not be far from the truth

if we say, "With its listening to preaching Christianity stands or falls."

The life of the Spirit in the modern member will further evidence itself in his demeanor toward the public prayers. Prayer is the heart of worship. We need nothing more than loyalty to reverence. Masfield declares that our Lord "followed, hungry and athirst, the lonely exaltation of his mind." Young people may encounter a like experience if they insist on maintaining a reverent attitude toward *all* public prayer, whether offered by a cultured pastor or an uncouth and ungrammatical brother in the midweek service. Irreverence toward prayer comes, not from hearing too much of it, but from hearing too little of it. Many a Christian devoutly thanks God for meeting prayer at prayer meeting—meeting it in all of its majesty and beauty. The Christian life is not so cramped that it can worship only on the Lord's Day. To mark the prayer service from the program of life always results in loss. It is a sane thing to give an extra hour per week to the cultivation of the soul. We must guard against the attitude of irreverence as well as against the act of it. Because worship is social we must take

care to "shun the appearance of evil." Let us be loyal to reverence and never more so than in respect of public prayer.

Then there is singing. Christians have never differed widely on hymns. On any Lord's Day you may take upon your lips words of adoration that welled from the heart of a devout Roman Catholic. A Methodist sings without questioning the hymn a Unitarian wrote. Yet how easy it is to lose the worship out of singing! Music hath charms, but it also hath lures. We must follow the thought as well as the tune. Some choirs do not lead the singing—they monopolize it. Congregational singing is a high form of social worship in which lives are welded. Whether it be an old hymn, with its heart-stirring appeal to memory, or a new song, vibrant with compassion for the ills of our own day, we cannot afford to lose sight of the fact that it is intended to help us "ascribe unto Jehovah glory and strength, the glory due unto his name." There should be no total abstainers among the congregation from the viewpoint of song.

Singing as part of public worship is sometimes discounted because of its deep emotional

appeal. Let us be calm, men say. Let us be more thoughtful and less jubilant. There are so many people for whom the intellect is merely a tin kettle tied to the tail of feeling that our public worship ought not to encourage them to additional emotional excesses. But it should be remembered that life can never be understood without deep feeling. Sometimes this feeling comes to us most effectively in silence. Protestants are slow to learn the value of quietness for public worship. Robertson of Brighton spoke of religious feeling that is "too intense to be excited, profound in its calmness." But the deep feeling essential to a true appraisal of life does not come to all of us in the same way. Yet, however it comes, come it must. There is more to life than emotion, but there is nothing to life without it. Take emotion out of your home, and you have left a house in which the ice-box stands in the parlor. Do away with emotion, and patriotism goes, and your flag is as meaningless as a dustrag. Why, then, should we shun emotion when we worship Him who "hath put a new song in our mouths—even praise unto God"?

It were of little avail were we to treat every

detail of the average service in this discussion. But it is necessary for us to bear in mind that the most sacred and solemn services—such as holy communion—may lose their meaning for us unless we constantly, with surpassing loyalty, cultivate the spiritual through the means of grace.

It goes without saying that there is much room for improvement in our services. To the writer, the worst present imperfection lies in the inadequacy of our hymnals. We need great hymns to voice our social gospel, to express our stewardship in terms of worship (giving is either an act of worship or it is unchristian), to inspire world citizenship, to foster church loyalty. Others, doubtless, have been impressed with imperfections in other respects. But there is a danger that we shall have our attention so focused on these shortcomings as to escape the source of the trouble. Quaint Josh Billings used to say: "Dissatisfaction with everything we come across is the result of being dissatisfied with ourselves." Truth is, there is much room for improvement in us. The modern member needs deep humility, lest he blame *things* for the defects in worship which God, with unerring judg-

ment, lays to the "thoughts and intents of the heart."

What happens when the church becomes recreant to worship is impressively marshaled before us in that record of the early churches given in the last book of our New Testament.

The church at Ephesus was guilty of a *wrong emphasis*. It had left its first love. When you go from first love to second, you respect, but do not worship.

The church at Pergamum was guilty of a *wrong tolerance*. It was so busy being considerate of others' views of life that it forgot to consider the Christian view of life. It would have put up with a "liberal" Sunday without protest. It would have maintained no Lord's Day Alliance.

The church at Thyatira was guilty of *wrong conduct*. It debauched and degraded womanhood. How could it fall so low? This is the reason: reverence begets *consecration*; irreverence, *desecration*.

The church at Sardis was guilty of a *wrong reputation*. It had a name that it lived and was dead. It had the form of godliness, but denied the power thereof. Does it take pro-

found thinking to guess how regularly its members came to church? How many "twicers," think you, in the lot?

The church at Laodicea was guilty of a *wrong indifference*. It was lukewarm. It had no enthusiasm. It was merely polished, polite, and probably exclusive: three items that have been known to register a fever temperature in the life of the church. Can you picture what type of prayer meeting it had? Can you imagine with what ardor the members participated in the services? The Laodicean church in *America* shies at mission study classes, duplex systems, centenary celebrations; and it is sure to outlaw evangelism.

Only two churches in this early cluster were intact. The sorely tried and poverty-stricken church at Smyrna was rich in spiritual resources. It kept God uppermost. The church in Philadelphia was strong in its weakness, for it had not denied His name. To the one it was promised "thou shalt receive a crown of life," and of the other it was clear that "no one took its crown." These were the regal churches. They were the throne rooms for God! The creed of the author of the twenty-seventh psalm was theirs:

"One thing have I asked of Jehovah, that will
I seek after:

That I may dwell in the house of Jehovah
all the days of my life,

To behold the beauty of Jehovah,

And to inquire in his temple.

For in the day of trouble he will keep me
secretly in his pavilion;

In the covert of his tabernacle will he hide me;
He will lift me upon a rock.

And now shall my head be lifted up, . . .

And I will offer in his tabernacles sacrifices
of joy;

I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto
Jehovah."

"And there I shall hear men praying the deep old simple
prayers,

And there I shall see once more the fond old faith
confessed,

And the strange old light on their faces who hear as a
blind man hears—

'Come unto me, ye weary, and I will give you rest.'"¹

¹"The Old Skeptic," from *Collected Poems*, by Alfred Noyes.
Frederick A. Stokes Company, Publishers, New York City.

CHAPTER IX

CHURCH WORK

THE laborers in the vineyard of the church may be divided in two sections: paid workers and volunteer workers. Our discussion is aimed at the latter. But a word about the former may not be out of place.

From its inception the church has set some of its people apart from the ordinary pursuits of life and intrusted them with the leadership of the church. So complex is the task of the modern minister that special training, involving years of study, must be had before one can hope to fulfill the requirements. In order that all the time and talent of its leaders may be devoted to spiritual ends, the church undertakes the support of its ministers. The scanty way in which this has hitherto been done, and the utter devotion with which these men have labored in spite of it, speak volumes for the average caliber of the ministry. Strictly speaking, a minister or deaconess is not a *paid* worker. The work thus done has no

equivalent in the coin of the realm. It were better to say that they are *supported* workers, although it is not at all plain that this would be more accurate!

The modern member ought to perceive that, in order to be his best, a minister ought to work absolutely free from personal financial embarrassment. Ministers have been known to go about soliciting their own salary, but what a spectacle that is! It has not helped any to offer the excuse that "he swallowed his pride." He cannot digest his pride. To swallow it will give him acute religious indigestion. It sacrifices both his manhood and his mission. He must be able to say with that great early preacher, "I seek not yours, but you." And the people should reply, with wisdom far surpassing wit, "We give you ours that it may be yours, that yours may become you, and you may become ours." Fair exchange is not robbery!

Nor dare the modern church member tolerate the attitude that is either complacent about the work the church is able to accomplish through its paid workers or that assumes that a "live" minister means a "live" church. We know many ministers, but we have never heard a

successful one confess that he was able to do, *in any field*, all that needed to be done. The church is either a company of saviours, intent upon Christianizing people and conditions, or it is not a church, in the Christian sense of that word. Not one single church member has the right to be at ease in Zion so long as the whole world is not yet won to Christ. There is too much to be done to expect any one person to do it, however well that one person may do his part. Generally speaking, the church may look to its ministry for the direction of the work, but for the execution of the work it must look to its laity.

A church worker must first of all be a Christian worker. This seems so trite a comment that it is hardly worth recording. But the modern church member's creed must have this written large. For, in the handling of sacred things we easily become calloused to them. There are those whose confession could still be,

"They made me keeper of the vineyards;
But mine own vineyard have I not kept."

We must constantly recall ourselves to the spiritual significance of church work. Char-

acter is not the only requirement for a successful church worker, but it is the chief requirement.

No modern member can permit the temper that measures the success of a church by the dollar standard. Whosoever acquires the view that the church is mainly a business proposition becomes kin to Shylock:

“Should I go to church,
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks?”

Worship is corrupted by it. Prayer for preacher or people is stifled by it. Spiritual growth is stunted by it. Indeed, it makes one kin to Judas. His chief interest comes to lie in keeping the lid of the cashbox clamped down tight, that religion may cost no more than his own is worth, which is little.

“The Church Boss,” who loves the chief seat in the synagogue, and for a pretense makes long prayers, is not the only cross current that robs the church of its power. Those who work church work to their own advantage affect the life of the church similarly. Church work as a convenient way of building up a reputation for generosity or

goodness is simply blatant self-worship. True church work is loyalty to a cause. It will not cease because some one "says something against" you. It comes from the holding of Paul's viewpoint, "In honor preferring one another." It comes when church members say to the church, "I am in the midst of you as one that serveth." It comes when we render "service where service is lost in delight" at the success of the work rather than the success of the worker. It comes when we have the mind that was also in Him. Church members need to be much in prayer, lest the source of their service become polluted and the motive with which they started their church work be degraded into mere self-seeking and self-praise.

When the spiritual motive is kept pure in the work for the church, we shall render "divine service." Commonplace tasks shall be pervaded by the holy passion and thus become uncommonly sublime. We shall raise money to raise mankind, and not to surpass the record of the year before or to outdo those who previously managed the finances. We shall hold office that the works of God may be manifest, not for power or praise or prom-

inence. We shall sing in the choir to show the light of the glory of God; we shall not regard the musical part of the service as the only worth while thing in it, and assume a condescending or indifferent attitude toward the sermon. We shall attend business meeting *religiously*; we shall not get *down* to business, we shall get *up* to it. We shall work the works of Him that sent us.

Love of God must be our constant incentive for church work. With that gone, it has neither beauty nor comeliness that we should desire it. With that kept uppermost, we have a right to call every high-purposed person to service in our ranks.

But there is more to church work than the question of the character of the worker. One must not only be spiritual, but *progressive*. Neither outworn messages nor threadbare methods will do. Many an ardent protestant against outworn creeds stands in need of a dose of his own medicine regarding outworn methods. Faulty methods are poor conductors for spiritual currents. The things many good people do to aid the church hinder it. Heresy of conduct *in* the church may prove as disastrous as heresy of opinion *about*

the church. We need a revival of church methods, with the emphasis on surrender. There is a timely insinuation in Paul's exhortation not to follow the customs of the present age. We must *excel* the customs of our day. We must not be content with "one-hoss-shays" in a day of automobiles.

The modern member must give himself to the furthering of an improved program of church work. The activities of the church must be *unified*. Elements of competition and duplication must be dispersed. Six organizations within one church doing the same kind of work means a scattering of forces, a loss of impact, and a ready field for jealous rivalries. When church work is team work God has a chance. We must not crowd all our forces into one sector and leave the rest of the front at the mercy of the enemy. We must subordinate and coordinate for success. The tuning up of an orchestra is discordant, but the great rendition more than justifies the moments of discord preceding it. The modern member must reconcile himself to the discord that is inevitable to the tuning up of a church. He must not be deterred by it. A greater church will come out of it; a church

that plays together, has a consistent program and works harmoniously. Church work must be unified.

It must also be simplified—perhaps it were better to say, clarified. Church work has often impressed folks as mysterious rather than powerful. This is due, in large part, to our failure to familiarize the members with our tasks and methods. The modern member must understand what machinery the church uses and creates to carry on its work. He should possess, at least, a general knowledge of the laws governing his denomination and the polity to which it is committed. If the church has the right to make great demands upon the time, talent, and treasure of its members, it surely becomes them to familiarize themselves with its various phases. No one can hope to be effective in church work who dwells within the narrow confines of his own church. He must look beyond and profit by the experience and discoveries of others. The best agency for the imparting of this vision is the *church periodical*. To know the church we must keep in touch with what it is doing and how this is being done. One who depends for his information concerning the church upon

the secular press is doomed to disappointment. Constant reading of the church periodical will enlarge one's horizon of the church, keep vital one's interest in the church, and improve one's work for the church. If the church ever becomes radical enough to insist that the reading of a church paper be a requisite for church membership, an amazing improvement in church efficiency will result.

Church work, furthermore, must be dignified. Insistence that it be characterized by spiritual enthusiasm will do much to effect this. It is too late in the day to suppose that church work is so inconsequential that anybody is qualified to do it. The Sunday school still bears the scars of this fallacy. Childhood is too valuable to be exploited by the enthusiasm of ignorance. Teaching the young becomes at once more sacred and powerful when proper qualification for this work is insisted upon. And in every line of church work this holds true. It is also becoming less habitual to think of church work as a charity rather than a privilege. The careless favoritism that fills offices with incompetents is most difficult to combat, but wherever it predominates, the value of church work is lowered. The wrong

type of officials tragically impede the progress of the church. The dearth of interest still so often evident in the selection of these officials can only be ascribed to a thoughtlessness ill befitting the day in which we live. Slipshod methods of finance, also, must soon be brought to a timely end. Useless trappings are everywhere discarded. There is no real reason why the church should put up with them. P. W. Wilson shrewdly observes that "endowed with the Spirit, they of the early church did not appoint one deacon only as trustee, but seven. In money matters they became as careful as any experienced man of business, to avoid needless temptation. There was no second Judas, dishonored but undiscovered. The detection of Ananias and Sapphira was instant and conclusive."¹ The modern church has much to learn from the early church. Church work is not washing dishes or selling tickets, though it *may* include these. It is something more than whiling away an hour per week with a class of innocents. It is the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, and *that* demands our best. We too must present our-

¹The Christ We Forget. Fleming H. Revell Company, Publishers, New York City.

selves approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed.

To catalogue all the activities that come under the head of church work would be a difficult task. They vary with communities and individuals. Some will be alluded to as we continue our discussion. It is well to bear in mind that church work does not always lie within the confines of a local church. The support of organizations that combat organized evil; of church colleges and secondary schools, which by their emphasis on character have furnished the greater part of the leadership of modern Christianity; of the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association—those strong-arm squads of the church; of church hospitals, that embody both the pity and the passion of the Master—the support of and cooperation with these is a very vital part of the work of the church.

Christians are stewards of time. They put the margin of life to good use. If the spiritual is supreme in the world, an honest share of our time should be devoted to it. Christians are stewards of talent. The gifts they have are not for self-enjoyment, but for self-invest-

ment. By information solicited from the pastors, the Young Men's Christian Association, at the outset of the war, endeavored to ascertain what talents possessed by the young men who went into service could be utilized and put into service. If some such inventory could be conducted on a nation-wide scale throughout the Christian churches, do you not think that we would blush for shame at thought of the tiny percentage of our tremendous resources that has been actually placed at the service of the church? It is possible—and profitable—for us so to examine ourselves. Let us take an inventory of our physical and social and intellectual and spiritual stock and see how much of it fails to register for the kingdom of God.

Does your church fear reverent scholarship? Is it content with easy creeds? Has it no thought for Christian opportunism? Has it no venturesomeness for God? Then consider your own relationship to these faults. Is it your inertia that tends to keep it powerless? Is it your prejudice that makes it cling to outworn shells? Can it be that your selfishness makes it averse to adopting new programs? Is it the exalted opinion entertained

by you concerning your way of working because of which you will not tolerate the suggestion that there are better methods than those you use? Your church is quantity *you*, plus. Are you a *minus* quantity to your church? The success of *any* church is a matter of *individual* consecration. Dwight L. Moody used to say that the world has never yet seen what God can do with one consecrated life. What can he do with yours?

“I will build my church,” was thy shout of joy,
When Peter owned thee Lord of all;
And the powers of sin can never o’er it win,
If we but heed thy call.

Thou canst build thy church through this life of mine,
But only if my all I give;
Thou canst victor be through my glad loyalty
If for thy cause I live.

I will be a stone in thy holy church,
A pillar in thy temple fair;
I will make it strong with hand and heart and song,
Its every burden share.

And the chorus—shall we *live* it?

To thy church, Lord Jesus, I will loyal be,
In its every service, Lord, depend on me;
By my help and presence and my gifts so free,
I will do my best to gain thy victory.

CHAPTER X

STEWARDSHIP

THE world does move. We have graduated from the mediæval conception that held piety and possessions incompatible. We are being graduated from the more recent notion that placed possessions far beyond the reach of piety. We are on the verge of a great revival, which will save the soul of the church—the revival of stewardship. Stewardship of time and stewardship of talent goes far, but does not go all the way. Stewardship of treasure is the outstanding emphasis of the modern church. It is being borne in upon us as never before that to own is to owe. Giving is the normal exercise for the development of the soul. We cannot live the Christian life unless we give the Christian way. It was a great day in the history of the church when it learned that its business is not to lord it over people, but to be the servant of all. It was another great day for the church when it perceived that its life depends, not upon

reverence for the mistaken views of our fathers, but for the eternal faith of our fathers. It would be easy to name a number of red-letter days in the history of the church, but it is difficult to imagine a greater day than that in which the Christian Church will rise to its full opportunity in its dedication of wealth to the Kingdom. And this great day is coming! Christian statesmen, perceiving the signs of the times, have launched soul-stirring, world-wide missionary programs which, they are convinced, will be possible because of Christian stewardship. It is conceivable that, here and there, some belated specimen will persist who does not catch the contagion of this great revival. But every modern member will hail it as the greatest truth God is unfolding to his church in this twentieth century.

The pagan view of property is that it is for self. The Christian view of property is that it is for character. The unchristian life spends *on itself*, the Christian life spends *itself*. "Honesty is the best policy" implies that good is for the sake of goods; but the Christian holds that goods are for the sake of good. When the Christian has money his

first question is, "Can it be used for righteousness?" When he has education his first thought is, "How can I place it at the disposal of the Kingdom?" When he has talent his immediate concern is, "How can it serve the cause?" He converts his gold, his gifts, his time into the coin of the realm of the Spirit. *This is the stewardship of life.*

Money makes the church go. It is not the only thing the church needs. It needs, as has been said, prayer, passion, program, loyalty, learning—to mention but a few. But it does need money. Hitherto, in response to occasional appeals, money has been doled out for the work of the Kingdom. Now we seek, not to stimulate an act, but an attitude; not to take collections, but to make convictions. Charles Lamb said of Byron: "He is great in so small a way." We are forced to acknowledge that the church's greatness has been on a similar scale. Our acknowledgment stirs us to higher views. We know now that when men hunger and thirst after righteousness they will invest their money to bring it about. We are seeing the point to the story of the prodigal son's unbrotherly brother. The selfishness that *keeps* is more despicable than the selfish-

ness that *spends*. Christianity, taken at its flood, leads on to stewardship.

This stewardship awakening—this recognition of the spiritual value of the material—will jolt us out of a pettiness that will look the smaller the farther we get away from it. To consider chiefly the budget of the local church tends to a narrow and self-centered idea of financial obligations, and never more so than where the church is already basking in the sunlight of prosperity. To present to our church members merely local needs is to give them an absolutely distorted notion of the financial requirements of the Kingdom, and results in that aloofness to foreign and home missions of which we are only now beginning to rid the church. It is like reading to them the one beautiful phrase on a terribly deranged page. Stewardship is the doctrine that we make cash to make character.

It means to place first things first. With the settling of life into certain professional or business ruts, there is much danger that we shall have settled and conventional ways of contributing toward religious causes, by which any progress in generous impulses becomes stilted or destroyed. Not only does this re-

sult in mistaking deed for motive, but it makes us incapable of responding to new needs that are outside of our accustomed range. We come to suffer from inability to extend our sympathy to the new. The lady who left a small fortune for the care of cats is a pathological example of this narrowing down of sympathy. The man who donates liberally to home missions but has his heart closed to appeals for foreign work expresses this same state of mind merely in a different form. But stewardship insists that "I and my" belong together. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." If the pocketbook does not first seek the Kingdom, it is anti-Christ.

Stewardship expresses itself in *tithing*. There is nothing in the conviction of stewardship to create the impression that tithing is the maximum of Christian giving. It is the minimum. The law of love is so ever-expanding an ideal that one merely "reaches after" but "cannot attain." Though we give much, we can never give enough. If it be contended that tithing is a rule rather than a conviction, we say with Shakespeare "that which we call a rose by any other name would smell as

sweet." For, if one stops to remind himself of the degree of liberality to which the average Protestant has thus far attained, it becomes immediately apparent that nothing short of a very strong conviction will ever elevate us to the tithing standard. Even our solemn covenant of church membership proved impotent to persuade us to dedicate ten cents on the dollar for the work of the Lord.

This biblical standard commends itself to common sense. It has a most practical aspect. Tithing could solve to the full all our problems of finance. One church coping with a downtown problem came under our observation. Ten years ago its membership was well past the seven hundred mark. Besides, it had a goodly number of non-church members who were regular contributors. It had a considerable percentage of well-to-do folks. It is exceedingly conservative to estimate that three hundred contributors averaged an annual income of nine hundred dollars. Yet this church had a constant struggle to raise a modest budget of about seven thousand dollars. Had its contributors been tithers, this church would now be able to render the great service which its location warrants and its community re-

quires. Resources for the world-wide work of the church would be available were tithing universal in the Christian Church. Conceding that its opportunities are so manifold as to stagger our imagination, and that great fortunes could be used without the matter of a surplus suggesting itself, still, with tithing, it would not require many years before even its largest opportunities would be well financed.

The reaction upon the giver must not be forgotten. This is a deliberate subscription to a deliberate self-denial. Nothing but high devotion brings one to take this step. What we do with what we have reacts upon what we are. Of course there are dangers. Our defeats always lie closest to our victories. Tithing may be regarded as the end rather than the means of service. The source of generosity may become polluted by the self-righteous feelings actuated by the giving, just as devotion may become polluted by church attendance. But such a moral monstrosity is least likely to afflict those who form the habit of tithing, since the conviction that brings about this habit is that giving is a privilege rather than a condescension, an *investment* rather than a *divestment*. The tither

has avowed his determination never to sink beneath a certain standard, but the tendency is always upward, unlimited because of love, limited only by ability. *Tithing is the practical safeguard the generous soul imposes upon himself to protect the finances of the Kingdom.*

"The gift without the giver is bare." Some one has said that saints are those who hurl their lives after their prayers. Stewardship gets us to hurl our property after our prayers. If we pray "Thy kingdom come," we shall not "withhold more than is meet." If Christ has *us*, he will also have *ours*. Jacopene, the pious but erratic monk, on one occasion was found weeping loudly, and on being asked the cause of his grief, said "Because love is not loved." Stewardship comes to say to the modern member that he must love love enough to live for it and to give for it to the uttermost.

If it be argued that the emphasis on tithing is not conducive to church membership, we reply that the persons who have gone in for tithing have inevitably found it a venture into joy. They are loudest in their praises of it who have longest practiced it. The man who measures church membership by what it will cost him has no sense of values. His every

outlook upon life will be blurred by the dollar sign. There is no relationship in life so sacred but that the beam of gold in his eye will blind him to its beauty. The higher men are in the scale of being, the farther will they be from such an estimate of money. There is that in the company of Christ which makes for generosity. Those who truly walk with him are bound to make gold the servant of God.

This is no academic question with the modern member. This is no unimportant matter that can await a more convenient season. This is a question that comes with its personal challenge to every one of us *now*. It is easy enough to read about stewardship and to hear about it. But what shall we *do* about it? Shall we make it history? Shall we be in the front ranks of this advance movement? Can it be that we are still so callous to the spiritual issues here involved that we can go to church next Sunday and give on the tiny scale we have been giving? This is sure: whatever may be true of an institution, no Christian can hope to be "great in a small way." We do not honor Christ until we lay our treasures at his feet. To dedicate one tenth to God's cause is surely the *least* we should do.

CHAPTER XI

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

PAUL was able to give a wonderful testimony: "When I was a child, I spake as a child." Is it mere fancy to detect in this statement a high tribute to Paul's parents, or were they many centuries ahead of their time? At any rate, most of us, to be true to facts, would have to say, "When I was a child, I spake as an *adult*." Mature conceptions and mature conduct were expected of us; we repeated terms that far surpassed our understanding and that had no power to make a vital contribution to our lives.

Jesus proved his right to the world's leadership when "He set the child in the midst of them." There are still churches that use dim, dirty or dismal basements for the instruction of childhood. But Jesus did not put the children under them, he put them in the midst of them. He made the child the center. The most hopeful sign for the modern church is that it is, in this respect, catching up with

its Master. It perceives now that, unless a little child shall lead it, it is hopelessly astray. Ultimately the world can be Christianized only by way of the child. If the church should persist in its attempts to climb in any other way, it is the thief of the future and the robber of the Kingdom.

Nothing so stirs the soul of the young person entering the fellowship of the church as its great concern for the redemption of childhood. Nothing ought to trouble the souls of church members more than neglect to do their "bit" toward this. Jesus entered upon the most scathing denunciation of those who disregard these "little ones." Everyone should try to discover just what would be Jesus's opinion of him in his attitude toward child life. "Why should *I* join the church?" defiantly asked a young person of a pastor recently. "For many reasons," was the reply, "but chiefly for this: *the child.*" The boys who have fought in the great war have often been much comforted by the thought that they were fighting "to make childhood possible." It is precisely for this reason that forward-looking men and women gladly devote themselves to the work of the church.

“No change in childhood’s early day,
No storm that raged, no thought that ran,
But leaves its track upon the clay
Which slowly hardens into man.”

There is no part of church work more rich in possibilities and rewards than the training of the young.

That education is greatly indebted to the church is one of the accepted facts of history. “The thought that each one of us stands in some direct, indefinitely modifiable relations with God,” says Professor Coe, in *A Social Theory of Religious Education*,¹ “has been an immeasurable inspiration to self-development. It has stimulated education. Long before our States reached a conviction that the public-school system should reach all the way to the university, or even to the high school, ministers were successfully appealing to farmers, mechanics, and shopkeepers to found and support academies and colleges and to send their sons thereto.” The church has not lost its passion to minister to the intellect—and it is not going to lose it. One is far afield in his outlook upon life who presumes that the church is going to be long satisfied with its

¹ Published by Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York City.

present attainments in this direction. As it grows in grace it is sure to grow in knowledge.

The development of the Sunday school has been marvelous, but much remains to be done before the Sunday school can adequately cope with the needs of our day. All too large a proportion of our membership takes no thought of responsibility or relationship to this work. The modern member must clearly perceive the importance of this leviathan effort to Christianize humanity at its base.

Young as religious education is for Protestantism, it has undergone some notable changes and equally notable ones are now taking place. In extending these to every local school the modern member can render high service.

For one thing, dogmatic, iron-cast, hide-bound instruction is on its way out. It made of us parrots repeating phrases in which dust called unto dust. Through it we were ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Sometimes the emphasis was placed on teaching the Bible and sometimes on teaching the teachings of the church, but it was the Bible or the church rather than the child that was considered. The modern member yields to no man in his devotion to

the Bible or to the church. But both are means to an end. The end is the life of the Spirit. The dogmatic education did not set the child in the midst of life. It put the child in the midst of theories and rules and creeds

“... where eyes have naught to see
But dead museums and miles of misery.”¹

This sort of teaching never was Protestant. That is why it has had such a hard time of it lately. For Protestantism is democracy in religion, and literalism is untenable for those whose minds are on the move. Every Protestant who has his eyes open can readily detect many and tragic consequences of the Roman Catholic system of education, much as we acknowledge the wisdom of their insistence upon it. The trouble, of course, is that, so far from setting the mind free, it ties the mind with chains of superstition to the harbor of improvised infallibility. When Protestants teach dogmatically, when they teach *to* rather than *for* child life, they threaten to do for us what the Roman Catholic system of education has done for them. Atheism failed to

¹ “Sonnets” from Collected Poems of John Masefield. The Macmillan Company, Publishers, New York City.

make freethinkers, but Protestantism is succeeding in making thinkers free. We no longer want truth thought out for us, we want truth thought through by us. At a not very remote date this type of teaching will be obsolete. The modern member will do all he can to hasten the day when we shall celebrate its funeral.

Still another type of religious teaching is coming to an end; but this type dies harder because there is in it so much of real value. Religious education thus far has been chiefly individualistic, often wholly so. Of course we shall never have the world Christianized without individual surrender to Jesus Christ. That is the real value in this type of teaching. But where this is emphasized to the neglect of world-redemption, it is of all teaching most miserable. Individual instruction sets the child apart from *them* rather than in the midst of *them*. Its best loved text (a great text wrongly applied) is "Come out from among them and be ye separate." It makes for a religious aristocracy and not for a spiritual democracy. It uses evangelism aside from education rather than side by side with it and fails to see that these two should be joined in happy and

lasting union. It speaks of the gospel as the good news for an individual more than as the good news of the Kingdom.

Modern religious education is social. It means the opening of life in its entirety to the power and Spirit of God. It attempts to give the *forward look*. Lessons are prepared and methods are employed by which pupils are helped to look out upon the world through the eyes of Jesus. "The burden of the valley of vision" is placed upon their hearts. "The church needs a moral narrowing and an intellectual broadening," said Dr. Coffin in his recent Yale lectures. The modern church must see to it that these are provided in youth, when they will do most good. Modern religious education attempts to impart the *forward life*. It is more interested in transition than in tradition. It looks forward to the promised land and not backward to the flesh-pots of Egypt. It "rings in the Christ who is to be." With outstretched neck, as Weymouth puts it, it awaits the manifestation of the sons of God and presses on to that which lies ahead. Modern religious education tries to inculcate the *forward love*. The widespread pessimism that makes "the light of the days

that have been the dark of the days that are," the theology that regards the world as a defunct institution waiting to be placed in the hands of a receiver, is offset by the optimistic teaching that the world, its laws, its customs, its habits, its national and international relations, its every branch of human activity shall be brought into captivity to the Spirit and mind of Jesus, and the kingdom of heaven shall forevermore dwell among men. The simple addition of forward look plus forward life plus forward love sums up the grand total of the Christian life, and religious education must make these possible.

From what has been said, it follows that there is to be no abatement of the spiritual emphasis. When we "add to our ardor, intelligence," ardor is sometimes crowded out through the back door. The danger of intellectualism is a lack of enthusiasm. High thinking and deep feeling are not incompatible. The consciousness of God is the supreme factor in human life. In our admiration for the new we dare not sacrifice the true.

The modern member will also discover that there is a new emphasis necessary on the time element in education. Not enough time

has been devoted to religious instruction. An hour per week is not enough. Weekday religious instruction is coming in vogue and, unless all signs fail, will have a mighty influence upon the future of the Christian Church. It provides for instruction under such conditions and at such times as are correct from the standpoint of pedagogy. It aims to make the church school fully as effective as the day school. The Gary system has had the limits of praise and denunciation showered upon it, but the fundamental principle of its religious aspect, namely, that religious training must be a part of the daily life of the child, is based upon a recognition of the needs of child life. It is such constant, thorough instruction that holds out high hope for a speedy Christianizing of our land. If childhood is won to Christ, the rest will be easy. Weekday religious instruction is still in its infancy in most Protestant denominations. The modern member will help to make it full grown.

The inestimable value which he places upon the spiritual will also compel the modern Christian to look into the matter of weekday religious instruction for adults. If he does this, he will hear God say again, "My people

perish for lack of knowledge." He will see that much of the inefficiency of the church can be traced to downright ignorance. We are living in a great day, and it must be greatly lived. To acquaint oneself with the program of Jesus and with the existing problems to which this program must be applied is no small matter. The agencies at our disposal now are not to be slighted, but they are not sufficient for our need. There must be regular courses of study loyally pursued. The Young Men's Christian Association Bible classes, meeting simultaneously and weekly, illustrate what might be done in the average church.

For children, the graded system of instruction should be more universally adhered to. For the young people the church society must conduct courses for which there is a need, courses that touch the problems of life as they meet them face to face. Every young person should take a course in the life of Christ and one in missions. The first will be conducive to "moral narrowing," the second to "intellectual broadening," although either could well do both. The church forum is looked upon with much favor in some circles for adults. Just how much it can contribute toward the

religious emphasis is not clear, as yet, but it is worth a try. The only defect in organized Bible classes is that everybody does not attend them!

According to the Yale lectures to which we referred, we are "not to produce good and faithful members of the church after conventional standards, but to develop Christians of enlightened and sensitive consciences, who will upset existing standards and under the guidance of the Spirit of Christ reshape both church and world. Southey at the conclusion of his *Life of Wesley* characterizes him as 'a man of great views, great energy and great virtues.' Let the church see to it that all her members possess great views; they are prerequisites of great energy and great virtues."¹

Let us face once again our stewardship of time and talent in the light of this need for religious education. Here we encounter, in addition, a stewardship of *thought*. What are we doing to gain and impart great views?

¹ In a *Day of Social Rebuilding*, by Henry Sloane Coffin. Yale University Press, Publishers, New Haven, Connecticut.

CHAPTER XII

WORLD EVANGELISM

SILVESTER HORNE called evangelism "the patriotism of humanity." Evangelism has often been given an unsavory reputation through the spiritual crimes committed in its name. Cheap sensationalism, intimidation, blasphemy, commercialism—how often have these paraded under the evangelistic flag! It takes a lofty definition to uphold its true character.

All our past experiences tend to make our conceptions of evangelism one-sided. The moment the term is mentioned we think of revivals, protracted meetings, evangelists, big choruses, mourners' benches, or "hitting the trail." The world has not yet outlived its need of Chapmans and Sundays, though it has never stood in need of small imitations of these real men. For the most part, we find it difficult to form a picture that comports with the modern conception when we speak of evangelism.

Evangelism for the modern member divides itself—or, rather, expands itself—into three sections. In the first place, there is *personal evangelism*. This is by no means a new thing under the sun. It corresponds to the “personal work” of which we hear so much in revival times and so little the remainder of the year. It should, in truth, be *the perpetual activity* of every Christian. Our aversion to it is not always due to spiritual paralysis. It comes sometimes from an imperfect conception of what it is. There are some phases of it that are not ordinarily credited under personal evangelism. Many men have imperfect notions about God. The doctrinal system upon which they were told their salvation depended is abhorrent to their sense of justice or to the measure of intellect with which God has endowed them. To bring God within range of such folks is personal evangelism. Many others deem the Bible and science at variance. To clear away their misconceptions is personal evangelism. Many have been led to believe that a mode of conversion of which they are incapable is necessary to the Christian life. To set them right on this point is personal evangelism. Many think of Chris-

tianity as a body of hair-splitting opinions, quite beneath the notice of men who busy themselves to make this world a fit place in which to live. To reveal to them that it is the life of the Spirit is personal evangelism. It is to this untraditional type of personal evangelism that we must, increasingly, give ourselves.

Nor should the traditional type be slighted. "Individual effort is imperative if collective success is to be obtained." The Korean church makes it obligatory upon its members to win at least one other to Jesus Christ. Their theory is that every member is an evangelist or he is not a Christian. And why should not every member be an evangelist? Our marching orders are to "go and evangelize." No single piece of work will bring more joy into one's life and more blessing into the life of another than the introduction of an individual to Jesus Christ. "He brought him to Jesus" is a tribute one may well covet. It is the most contagious activity to which one can give himself. So deep is the satisfaction of bringing a soul "in tune with the infinite" that one develops a passion for this life-winning. Only those who have never tried

it speak of it lightly. Let it not be forgotten that personal evangelism is a social service. It "releases the energies of another individual for the Kingdom." It wins one more advocate for the cause of Jesus Christ. It saves one more soul from "the death-feasts with the husks and swine" to "the glory of the lighted mind."

In the second place, there is *social evangelism*. It is here that the departure from the traditional meaning of evangelism is the farthest. It is here that the return to the New Testament meaning is the clearest. The passion that cleaned out the money-changers who could not be cleaned up is laying hold on us. The gospel that sets up upsets. Social evangelism comes to proclaim a righteous indignation against organized sin, under whatever guise or patronage it may present itself. But it comes to do more than this. It comes to proclaim the reign of God "wherein dwelleth righteousness." It bestirs itself to spiritualize the social order, as well as to proclaim the utter damnation of the many Dives who feast on sumptuous foods while dogs are feasting on their Lazarus brothers at their gates. It demands that business shall be service; yes,

and that it shall be saviourhood. Personal evangelism leads one to Jesus; social evangelism leads one to the Kingdom.

The modern member has a fight on his hands here. The fight is, first of all, against his personal inclinations, for this social evangelism is a thorough kind. It invades his countingroom; it enters his office; it affects his employees or employers; it gets into the recesses of his politics and finds its way into the remotest corners of his business deals. It is a most uncomfortable thing to have around if you have not definitely and wholeheartedly cast in your lot with the Kingdom. So long as families live in dingy tenements because they net twenty-five per cent on the investment to some official board member who soars to solemn heights of indignation whenever the term "higher criticism" falls upon his ears, so long will the Church of Christ be under condemnation of this gospel of social justice. It is not an easy matter for anyone whose lot it was to see the light of day in comfortable and cultured environment to yield to this gospel. It is so much easier to learn by heart the catalogue of sins responsible for one's brother's condition than to acknowledge

the justice of his demands and to fit our own business for the Kingdom or to reverse our easy notions of civic righteousness. Many a modern member is modern in everything but his conception of the Kingdom. If he could discern the signs of the times, he would know that the Kingdom is at hand. The thirteenth of First Corinthians could then take on new meaning for him, much as it did for one of the prophets of the new day: "Love is just and kind. Love is not greedy and covetous. Love exploits no one; it takes no unearned gain; it gives more than it gets. . . . Love enriches all men, educates all men, gladdens all men. The values created by love never fail; but whether there be false privileges, they shall fail; whether there are millions gathered, they shall be scattered, and whether there are vested rights, they shall be abolished. For in the past strong men lorded it in ruthlessness and strove for their own power and pride, but when the perfect social order comes, the strong shall serve the common good. Before the sun of Christ brought in the dawn men competed and forced tribute from weakness, but when the full day shall come they will work as mates in love, each

for all and all for each. For now we see in the fog of selfishness, darkly, but then with social vision; now we see our fragmentary ends, but then we shall see the destinies of the race as God sees them."

And if the modern member conquers his personal inclinations and yields to the social gospel, he is still tempted to regard it as a minor affair, a beneficent, humane thing, rather than as the plea for the kingdom of God. The social gospel is not charity, though it does include that. Charity, however beautiful, is an evasion of an unchristian order rather than a correction of it. The social gospel is not mission work, or slum work, though either may be part of it and of personal evangelism. It is a beautiful thing to "snatch brands from the burning." It is the sort of thing Christ never failed to do when opportunity presented itself.

"The chart before him lay, wherein to see
Defeat and failure as his ancestry,
Weakness and pain as his heredity.
He bowed his head in bitter agony,
Feeling himself unworthy utterly.
The Light, through black despair,
Shone piercingly.

‘They have forgot my Brother,’ whispered he,
‘Jesus, who died for others on the tree,
And my great Father God who strengthens me.’”

But snatching a brand from the burning is, after all, not putting out the fire. It is to this that the Social Gospel addresses itself.

The Federations for Social Service in leading denominations are actuated by social evangelism. The declaration of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church fittingly voices it: “With the demand for industrial democracy the churches are intensely concerned, for democracy is the expression of Christianity. . . . Christianity moves up to higher ground. It requires the supremacy of the principle of cooperation in the industrial world. The church must, therefore, clearly teach the principle of the fullest possible cooperative control and ownership of industry and of the natural resources upon which industry depends, in order that men may be spurred to develop the methods that shall adequately express this principle. *Then will industry become a religious experience, developing mutual service and sacrifice, the interpretation in economic terms of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God.*”

In the third place, there is *world evangelism*. This is expressed in the missionary movements of the church. The modern member regards missions from a new viewpoint. This new viewpoint is made possible in part by the testimonies of those intrepid pioneers among the missionaries and in part by the study of comparative religion. The old view was that heathen religions were wholly false, products of the devil, utterly devoid of all semblance of truth. The new viewpoint holds that God has not left himself without witness anywhere. "By divers portions and in divers manners" God has revealed himself to men of all faiths. The missionary does not go to those whom he regards as enemies; he goes to those whom he regards as brothers, for whom his Christ died. He does not go shouting, "You are wrong and I will show you the right"; his speech the rather resembles that of the first great missionary, Saint Paul: "What, therefore, ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you."

This new viewpoint does not restrain our passion for their redemption. It increases it. We now have some basis on which we can meet. We all are brethren, and one is our Master, even Christ.

The desire to win the world for Christ in this generation finds much to intensify it these days. Fundamentally, of course, there is the passion for redemption. This is inherent in Christianity. No one who has received the Holy Spirit will want the unholy to exist anywhere on the globe. No one loves Christ enough who does not want, and want passionately, to see the whole world at his feet. "Foreign missions" as a term may be geographically correct, but religiously it is a misnomer. They are *our* missions, and it is our mission to see them through.

Then there is the conviction that this is the program of God. J. R. Pepper puts it well in a paragraph entitled "From a Purely Business Standpoint": "The church is in real business—religious business. The church desires to do all the business it can with all the people it can. The church cannot be satisfied with a retail business to a purely local clientele. The church must do a wholesale business. The church, in doing a wholesale business, must extend its business to the largest area possible. The church cannot satisfy itself with the business of one continent. The church must seek the patronage of the whole

world. The church must invest enough of its capital and men to do a wholesale business in an enterprising way. The rim of the earth is the only limit to the business of the church. If the church is to touch the other man, and the other man is to touch the other man, then the church of necessity must reach the utmost limits of the globe before it ceases its effort." This sort of hearty logic will commend itself to the modern member. He will see that it is a world-wide business God wants carried on.

Moreover, it is not only for *their* salvation, but for *our* salvation that the gospel must be sent everywhere. For one thing, we would starve ourselves spiritually if we left a single brother or sister anywhere on earth groping for God "if haply he might find him," when we have been made stewards of the manifold mercies of God. For another thing, in a world where science and commerce and statecraft are welding all together, if the Christian does not predominate, the unchristian will. It is folly to think of the world as a collection of fragments that have no vital relation to each other. No part of the world can longer be spoken of as apart from us; every part is a part of us. The war has introduced the

world to itself. The newspapers have for several years been instructors in geography. We have learned that it *does* matter what happens elsewhere. The civilization for which the Allies have won this war is endangered so long as anywhere on earth persist those whose ideals are estranged from it. A remarkable book on the Peace Conference held some time before the outbreak of the war called attention to the fact that "all the world was in one room." But it is not enough for all the world to be in one room. All the world must have *one purpose*. If that purpose is not Christian, there is but one alternative.

World evangelism does not simply wish to bring missions to the world; *it tries to bring out the mission of the world*. Collective humanity must come under the reign of God. The whole world must come under the dominion of the Prince of Peace. The church must set its face like flint against everything that keeps back the world from functioning for God. Against a sordid materialism the church, therefore, pits Christian stewardship. Against a false nationalism the church pits Christian evangelism, by which all the ends of the earth are rallied under the standards of one King.

So it comes that the sisterhood of nations is part of world evangelism. In his lectures Dr. Coffin said: " 'Go ye and make disciples of all the *nations*' has stood before the church's eyes as the climax of her first Gospel; but she has often read the words to mean only 'make disciples of individuals in all the nations.' . . . Nations are to be made disciples of Jesus."¹ And, be it said to the praise of modern missionaries, they have not been content with reaching the individual; they have made for international good will. Every modern member must be immensely concerned for the Christianizing of governments and peoples.

We have been expressing our patriotism in large gifts to the Young Men's Christian Association, the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and other worthy causes. But if evangelism is indeed the patriotism of humanity, what proportion should it share in our giving? What proportion in our sympathy and cooperation? Given a Christian world, with nations as well as individuals Christianized, and when would war resurrect itself out of the pit which we have dug for it with the

¹ In a Day of Social Rebuilding. Yale University Press, Publishers, New Haven, Connecticut.

war? Do you not see that it all comes to this: That man is his country's worst foe who has least sympathy for the rest of the world; while that man is his country's best friend who most desires to see all the world brought to the mind of Christ.

This, then, is the sum of the matter: Personal evangelism leads to Christ; Social evangelism leads to the Kingdom; World evangelism leads to both of these and to the Peace that passeth understanding. Well may we question ourselves concerning our alignment to this great trinity of true salvation.

“As laborers in thy vineyard,
Send us, O Christ, to be
Content to bear the burden
Of weary days for thee;
We ask no other wages,
When thou shalt call us home,
But to have shared the travail
Which makes thy kingdom come.”

CHAPTER XIII

RELIGIOUS READING

No one can hope to be a worthy member of the Church of Christ who omits from the program of his life the reading of religious literature. We err much in regard to our reading. Many of us confine ourselves to a daily diet of newspapers and linger long and lovingly in those sections of them where the cartoonist awaits us with his smile. A weekly treat to a magazine or a monthly perusal of a novel suffices us. Solid books of solid thought we, for the most part, put away when we left school and left them to "dry rot at ease till the Judgment Day."

A recent article on "The Failure of the Church" gave as one reason for it the comparatively small circulation of religious literature. Time was when people read sermons eagerly and when books dealing with spiritual subjects were greatly in demand. Some one wrote on the fly leaf of an old book of sermons in the Boston library:

“If there should be another flood,
For refuge hither fly;
Though all the world should be submerged,
This book would still be dry.”

This sums up the feeling of many toward religious literature to-day. Many glibly confess that they never read their Sunday school lesson outside of Sunday school. A religious weekly—official organ for a large denomination—in a recent attempt to enlarge its circulation had as its goal one subscriber for every twelve members!

This unpopularity of religious literature is the more to be deplored because the church cannot hope to live if it does not gain the intellectual respect of the world.

The world stands far more in need of a literature of goodness than of good literature. The issues of life and death have become vivid for us during the last few years. The eternal verities are being sought after. In proportion as men think deeply, the hope develops that religious literature will come into its own.

Modern church members must clear their minds of any misconceptions concerning it. Religious literature is not somber literature. It is not devoid of joy. Indeed, it is ques-

tionable if any other type of literature touches so many springs of joy as this. It dare not be light-headed, but it dare be light-hearted. Religious literature is not uninteresting. Of course there is exception to every rule, but, speaking generally, the charge is untrue. Why should we always think of the serious as uninteresting? Is love for husband, wife, sweetheart, child, not serious? Is business not a serious matter? Yet is there anything more interesting than love and work? A true "thriller" is not a book that sets your nerves on edge; it is a book that leaves your soul "face fronted, standing up."

Religious reading helps us to get a *serious view* of literature. We stand in sore need of this. Many a writer, under cover of a love story, thrusts a spear in the side of the church and mocks at the devout habits which are the priceless heritage from our forebears. Many a writer busies himself with casting shadows upon the white lights where our hearts at best must dwell. Fertile minds concoct half-truths that are more dangerous than lies and their recorded utterances disguise falsehoods in golden words. We should be quick to detect untruth and awake to the reasons why the

Old Testament pronounced woe on "writers that write perverseness." And this we cannot do unless we have saturated our minds with great men's great thoughts concerning God.

We hear too many confessions of reading "just to kill time." The statement is grotesque. Literature cannot be made the assassin of eternity nor the coffin of any fraction of it. Eating may or may not be for enjoyment, but the main object of eating is life. So reading may or may not be for enjoyment, but the main object of reading is life. A man who eats only for enjoyment we call a glutton. What shall we say of one who reads only to "kill time"? We must read to *fill* time, to make the future full, to make life abundant, to make eternity real. Reading has all too long been looked upon as an entertainment rather than an attainment. Blessed is the man who takes reading seriously; who, even when he does not read *for* religion, reads *with* religion.

The reading of religious literature keeps us alive to the questions and discoveries of the day. All the truth about God has not yet been discovered. "New occasions teach new duties," and perplexities arising in our day

need to be reviewed in the light of the Christian faith. Every young church member ought to get his or her name on the advertising list of some reliable publishing house for religious literature and carefully scan the catalogues for the best books on current problems. A writer recently said that "the layman is an incorrigible person. He simply will not become interested in church questions, and thereby he saves Christianity." We quote this statement to suggest how lamentably behind the times it is. One season spent in an organized Bible class would convince any inquirer of the interest laymen take in church matters to-day. The modern member will eagerly read what the great minds of the day "think on these things."

When we are deeply interested in a thing we read about it. If we are much interested in religion, we will read much about it. It is impossible to be a thoroughly useful member of the Christian Church unless we are constantly in touch with the larger doings of the church universal. To encourage religious literature now: to have it in the home, so that the children weekly look forward to the Children's Page of a paper that stands for the

children's Saviour; to be able to recommend to them as they grow up some two or three great books that have gripped our lives and made them strong—to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" even in our reading, is the surest guaranty of saving the coming generation to the Church of God.

It remains for us to put the crown of religious literature where it belongs. We are "the people of the Book." In a wide sense we are the people of *one* book. All other books are to be judged in the light of it. All other books are insignificant compared with it and valuable only as they are true to its spirit. Well that we walk with poets; well that we listen to sages; well that we live over again the deeds of the long ago; but it is far from well with us unless we love *the* Book. It is the summit of all literature.

"As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

We do not honor it most by setting up unworthy claims for it or by denying ourselves the light that reverent scholarship is able to

shed on it. A book that so uniquely reveals God in Jesus Christ cannot be made to suffer from honest inquiry. We have a right—indeed, a duty—to know how it came to be and how it teaches truth. Every modern church member ought to acquaint himself with the making of the Bible. It is a matter of deep reproach to the modern church that not more of its members have been brought to a clear view of the way God has given this matchless book to his church.

We have not begun to exhaust the possibilities of the evangelism of literature; but the greatest step in this direction has been the maintenance of the American Bible Society. No one of us shall ever be able to estimate what the spreading of the Bible in every tongue and every land means in the “healing of the nations.” Nor shall we be able to compute what contribution it has made to the morale of the armies in the field and what comfort it has brought to those who waited for the sons and brothers who had gone to war. We cannot do enough to aid its rapid spread throughout all the world.

Everybody ought to make Bible-reading a habit. Steady reading of the Book is the

steadying influence in the midst of the much reading of students. It is the sunny spot whither men may come after they have been in the fogs of commerce and the shadows of business and warm their hearts with the speech of God. It is the clearing in the wilderness of the world's vast literature. He reads to no purpose who reads without the Bible.

"I know," said poor Coleridge, "I know the Bible is divine, because it finds me." "Don't worry about clergy and churches," writes a modern scribe. "Let them go their own way—at any rate, for the moment. Read and know the Bible, and all else, including public worship, will fall into its place." "Bring me the book," said Sir Walter Scott to Lockhart in his dying hour. "What book?" asked Lockhart. "There is but one book, the Bible." A worthy member of the Christian Church must be an intimate of the Christian book.

True, some have come to the gospel torch who never perceived its light. All through history there sounds the beat of muffled drums for those who never caught the fire! O the men who walked with Jethro's flock, but never saw, as Moses did, the bush that burns, but is not consumed! O the men who lived with

Jesus, but never recognized his love, and even called him fool! O the many who cherish holy memories of godly mothers, but never came to the Source of their saintliness!

But when one reads, *with the Spirit's guidance*, the wonderful words of life, the White Comrade walks out of the Gospels into one's heart! It is not "dry" reading, then. Then we partake of the hidden manna as we follow the children of Israel over burning desert sands. Then we climb, with that old youth, the ladder that leads to God. Then we hear the prophets champion the cause of the oppressed:

"How long," they say, "how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand to move the world on a child's heart—
Stifle down with a mailed fist its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?"

The Book becomes life and light and power then! It is the supreme book. None is superior to it, save perchance "the Lamb's book of life," which it is not given us to see now. But now—this book is the Christian's book. This is the Book we must read and live. Should we not read it daily while God gives us eyes to read, and then, "when those that look out at the windows be darkened," please God,

some one shall love us so as to sit and read it to us, that in our darkness there may be a great, great light!

“Hushed be the noise and the strife of the schools,

Volume and pamphlet, sermon and speech,

The lips of the wise and the prattle of fools.

Let the Son of Man teach!

Who has the key of the future but he?

Who can unravel the knots in the skein?

We have groaned and have travailed and sought to be free;

We have travailed in vain.

Bewildered, dejected and prone to despair,

To him as at first do we turn and beseech;

Our ears are all open! Give heed to our prayer!

O, Son of Man, teach!”

NOW UNTO HIM THAT IS ABLE TO DO EXCEED-
ING ABUNDANTLY ABOVE ALL THAT WE ASK
OR THINK, ACCORDING TO THE POWER THAT
WORKETH IN US, UNTO HIM BE THE GLORY IN
THE CHURCH AND IN CHRIST JESUS UNTO ALL
GENERATIONS FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.



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